Bill Neece

SLEEPING THROUGH THE SERMON

SLEEPING THROUGH THE SERMON

AND OTHER DISCOURSES

BY

ROBERT HUGH MORRIS, D.D.

Pastor Central North Broad Street
Presbyterian Church,
Philadelphia

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, 1916, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 17 N. Wabash Ave.
Toronto: 25 Richmond St., W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

To

The Memory of My Mother,

Whose Life

Was a More Eloquent Sermon

Than Has Been Put in Words

by Any Other Than

Her Blessed Lord

May He Who Uses
Imperfect Agents and Means
Use These Pages
And Make Them
A Blessing to All Who Read.

R. H. M.

CONTENTS

I. Sleeping Through the Sermon. Acts XX: 9 . 11

II. The Spiral Road. Deut. XVII: 16 . . . 24

III. Wounded in the Sword Arm. Luke VI: 6 . . 34

IV. The Divine Urge. Gen. III: 23 44

V. Peter Bound. Acts XII: 6 58

VI. A Magnificent Failure. II Chron. IX: 31 . 67

VII. The Sadness of a King. Ps. XLII: 3; I Sam. XVI: 14 80

VIII. Lest I too Be a Castaway. I Cor. IX: 27; I Cor. X: 12 91

IX. The Raven and the Dove. Gen. VIII: 6-7-8 . 102

X. Sacrifices Which Cost Nothing. II. Sam. XXIV: 14 110

XI. The Lame Prince of the House of Saul. II Sam. IX: 3 126

XII. Streams in the Desert. Isa. XXXV: 6 . . 137

XIII. The Many-Sided Jesus. Matt. XVI: 14 . . 146

XIV. The Glory of the Cross. Gal. VI: 14 . . . 158

XV. The Preëstablished Harmony Between Jesus and Youth. Prov. VIII: 17 170

I

SLEEPING THROUGH THE SERMON

"And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."—ACTS 20:9.

THIS accident happened in the city of Troas. The Apostle was on his return journey from a European missionary tour, usually referred to as his Third Missionary Journey. He had remained in Greece some three months, and a notable company of Christians had preceded him on his return trip and waited for him at Troas. In the number were Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. It was small wonder therefore that a congregation was easily secured for Paul on his arrival in Troas, and that though he remained there but seven days, one of those days, namely the first of the week, which is our Christian Sunday, was occupied by him in conducting religious worship. The record is that it was "upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread. Paul

preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." It was during this long, and no doubt interesting, discourse by the eloquent Apostle that a young man, sitting in an open window, was borne down with sleep and fell backward from the window upon the pavement below and was taken up dead.

We read further that Paul interrupted himself in the sermon, went down and fell on the young man and, embracing him, said, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again and had broken bread and eaten and talked a long while, even till break of day, soon he departed. And they brought the young man alive and were not a little comforted."

So far as I know this is the beginning of holding preaching services on the first day of the week, called in Christian lands the Lord's Day. It is interesting, also, in passing, that this first observance of the Lord's Day as a time for preaching the gospel happened in ancient Troas, a city somewhat in eclipse even in Paul's time, and now practically deserted, but which was once the site of a marvelous and beautiful city, the scene of the famous Homeric Trojan wars.

There is something suggestive of the first day of Pentecost and the scene in the Upper Chamber, when Peter preached and so many were converted

to the Way, in this account of the services held in the third loft of a house in ancient Troas. Though not directly involved in the message which we wish to present, it is, none the less, suggestive to us that record is made concerning "many lights" in this upper chamber. Those who feel they cannot rightly worship in a properly lighted building, but must have the "dim religious light" streaming through stained glass windows, would do well to read this story and ponder this little statement, that in this room where Paul preached, "There were many lights."

Another thought in passing, is that Paul was "long in preaching." Twice in the brief record it is pointed out that he continued his speech far beyond what might have been expected. Once the words are, "He continued his speech until midnight," and again, "As Paul was long in preaching." So much is said concerning the length of sermons that we commend these phrases to those who believe, as a certain famous University is said to believe, that no one is converted after the first twenty minutes. It was no twenty-minute, essence-of-rose-water, poetic essay, you may be sure, which Paul, the battle-scarred veteran of the Lord, was giving to the peopie in this upper chamber in Troas. It was, undoubtedly, strong meat, and not milk for babes.

To the average preacher of to-day these first twelve verses of the Twentieth Chapter of Acts should be particularly encouraging, if for no other reason than because it is here recorded that, during the long and serious preaching of one of the world's greatest masters of the art, a man fell asleep. We all remember Mr. Beecher's witty remark, that his sexton was instructed, whenever anyone was sleeping during the preaching, to go up into the pulpit and wake Mr. Beecher. It is indeed a witty saying, and worthy of Mr. Beecher; but as a matter of fact, people did sleep while Mr. Beecher preached. Perhaps not every time, but one who was a member of his congregation a number of years said in my hearing that he had more than once seen people sleeping under Mr. Beecher's eloquence. This does not detract from the great pulpit orator's glory, or minimize his ability. Circumstances and conditions over which the speaker has no control may have rendered persons in his congregation so physically exhausted, or mentally, or morally exhausted, that they could not become interested in what was being said and after a time lost consciousness. Physical exhaustion, unaccustomed quietness and stillness, a superheated atmosphere, lack of oxygen, and plain dullness and stupidity may induce sleep under given conditions, and a greater than Beecher was not able to preach

so thrillingly, so eloquently, so powerfully that Eutychus did not fall asleep.

There is a cheap jest which the humorous papers have used since humorous papers began, concerning the man who sleeps in the church and the dullness of the speaker at the sacred desk. It is a pity they are not a bit fairer and more just, for were they to observe carefully, and honestly to record their observations, they would be bound to say that some people sleep through comic opera, or even grand opera! I have even seen people sleeping, though I did not wonder so much at that, during the progress of a supposedly exciting wild western scene depicted on the cinema screen. May we not have done forever, those of us who have thought of it or had it brought to our minds in this way, with the cheap contempt poured upon the pulpit because, forsooth, now and then a tired or a dull or an unoxygenated person drops off to sleep during the course of the sermon? I have heard many sermons in many churches of many denominations, and my unbiased opinion is that, as an average, they are intellectually, rhetorically, and spiritually superior to the average discourse of any other class or description being delivered in our time.

The implications, suggestions and applications of this story are worthy of our attention to-day. Paul was not the first, or the last, preacher or prophet

to struggle against the exasperation of an audience which contained sleeping individuals, or which itself seemed, as a whole, unattentive and practically asleep to the message. With passionate earnestness the ancient prophets were always shouting, "Hear, O Israel;" and it is at least suggestive that one of them may have suffered from stolid indifference, from easy-going, smiling, waking-sleepfulness of an indifferent audience, which wrung from him the startling exclamation, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

Many whose eyes are open and who seem to listen are none the less to all intents and purposes asleep. They are busy with their own thoughts. They are too weary to follow the sermon. Their bodies are in the pews: their minds, their souls are in banks, factories, offices, anywhere, everywhere where their business has led them. Or in a craving for the rest which their weary bodies are denied, they may repose by shining waters, under green trees; or may be watching the coming and going of the restless tides of the sea; or climbing the aspiring mountains, cooled with airs washed by the snows; or they may be only at their homes, lolling in easy chairs or lying upon their beds. Absorption in pleasure or absorption in business may have caused them to drive their own bodily machinery until it is exhausted and ready to fall. Or,

slaves of a social system which demands of them long and tedious hours with unremunerative, inadequate pay, they may have themselves been so driven by others that, in the first moment of relaxation they lose control of their worn bodies and tired minds, and are unable to follow even the least subtle mental leadings of the minister. It is a picture of our day. I am certain it explains in a measure at least much of the inattention and indifference to the Gospel message. In their pleasure or in their business, some have driven themselves beyond the powers of endurance. They need to be reminded that Jesus could afford to take vacations from those three brief years of His public ministry, going aside to rest and recuperate, in order that He might have that soul power which would enable Him to commune with His Father. They need to be reminded, too, that when He was, on one occasion, about to feed the tired multitude, His command was, "Make the men sit down." Those who are driving others beyond the power of human endurance would do well to remember the compassion that Jesus had for the tired populace, and His great invitation that they should come unto Him when weary and heavy laden, and He would give them rest.

A correlated thought is suggested here when we remember that there is a hue and cry all over our

land to-day that our Christian Sabbath be changed from a day devoted to sacred pursuits and attendance upon the services of the church, and be given over to sports and games, as might have been the case in the ancient pagan world. The specious argument put forward is that for six days the poor must work within narrow walls, in dark rooms, in foul air, or under other trying and exhausting conditions, and that on Sunday they should be given opportunity to do those things which their more fortunate brothers and sisters may engage in during the week.

It sounds well, and if we do not think carefully and closely, we may not detect the error in the logic involved. But we can at least suspect the logic, because those who put forward such arguments are open to suspicion as to their motives in the case. Thus a loud hue and cry comes from those who would have the baseball parks open on Sunday: all other advocates of sports join in the cry. Thus, also, do the proprietors of beer gardens, dance halls and worse places contend that the poor should have the advantage of an open "lid" on Sunday. Is it not easily seen that the motive driving these people is not that of wishing to help the poor? It is rather that of wishing to fatten their own pocket books. They care no more for the poor than you do—not half so much. They want only

the money the misled laborer, or factory worker, or clerk in a department store would spend in their amusement halls, their ball parks, their beer gardens, their dance rooms on the Sabbath Day. No, the true answer is, "Give the man and the woman who works six days in the week wholesome surroundings for their labors, and adequate remuneration for their work, and such hours of employment as will enable them both to do the work and to maintain their health. The writer is no socialist, nor is he an agitator for social changes, but he cannot refrain from remarking that the Christian solution of the problem is as given above and not in turning over bodily the Christian Sabbath to those whose greed for gain makes them hypocritically weep over the "wrongs of the poor laboring man."

There are those who in church hear the sermon but do not heed. They hear words or phrases, but only with their physical ears. As our mothers used to say to us in childhood, their counsels went in one ear and out at the other. Paul was not the first, or the last, preacher to face an audience which gave him apparently respectful and earnest attention, and which indeed did select the poetic phrases, the striking metaphors, the interesting stories, and by so doing imagined they were receiving and appropriating the message. If there is any eloquence,

beauty, art, finish, to the sermon, there are not wanting those sermon-tasters who will discover it, but it is a difficulty over which the heart of every preacher groans to make his real message enter the ears of the soul. Perhaps this is why Jesus so constantly emphasizes the thought, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Indeed I sometimes think that Jesus felt His greatest miracle was not opening the eyes of the blind, raising the sick, strengthening the paralytic, cleansing the lepers, or even raising the dead, but rather making the deaf to hear.

People are sleeping through the Gospel message all over this land. Yea, in this city, and in this very church. They hear words but no message enters to the soul. Beauty, eloquence, power, these things, if they exist, in the sermon, are readily recognized and generally given due credit. But the message itself seems to have as truly passed over them as if they were the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Preaching in a Pennsylvania town some ten years ago, I put my whole soul into the humble message, as I thought, of Paul's great words, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation." After the services a well-dressed, but evidently illiterate woman shook my hand cordially and with a beaming smile condescendingly said to me, "Buddy, you just done fine." I dare say there

is no sincere or earnest Gospel preacher who has not had the very soul within him smothered in sorrow that his message has been preached to the sleeping, when, after his most soul-struggling effort, some pompous brother has remarked to him, as though it were the last word in sermon criticism, "Doctor, that was a strong message to-day," or some well-meaning sister has sweetly simpered, "Pastor, that was the most beautiful sermon I ever heard."

There are those who in a broader sense still are under the Gospel message, and yet do not hear it. Who can deny there is a message preached by every church building, every tolling bell, every tapering spire, every blanching tomb; by every noble appeal made through public print; by the thousand evangelical books and the ten thousand evangelical pamphlets that are scattered here, there and everywhere? Who can deny that even the history of our country itself is a Gospel message? And yet vast are the numbers who, on the next Sabbath Day, will feel no call of the message, let the bells peal ever so sweetly, let the choirs sing ever so beautifully, let the churches stand ever so nobly, let the preachers proclaim ever so eloquently. Thousands pass your church on the busy thoroughfare who are even unconscious that it is a church. Although the message in every stone of every sacred edi-

fice ought to call so loudly as to wake the dead, they hear not, they heed not. Vast is the number who will act as if they lived in the Babylon of 1500 B.C. or the Rome of 500 B. C., who do not stir in their souls, whatever may be the message that God is burning into the very pages of their nation's history. Heedless throngs on every street, heedless multitudes in every park; bodies awake, but souls asleep. How to waken these slumberous souls, how to bring them back from the arms of this twin brother of death, how to fall upon the young man, as Paul did at Troas, and reawaken within him the conscience and the dream,—that is the problem of the church and the soul-burden of the prophet of the church in this our modern life. Oh, for apostolic power of hand and head, of voice and heart, to waken the world that is sleeping through the mightiest Gospel sermons ever preached, proclaimed from every sacred edifice, from every hospital for healing, from every page devoted Christians have written, and from the very stones that mark the last resting places of their dead!

Oh, for apostolic power to waken a world which sleeps with the Bible in its hand but not in its heart, which is in danger each moment of falling headlong through the outer darkness and down to the death where there is no apostle to bring them

back to light and life! Oh! thou who art asleep, who art already dead in trespasses and sins, a greater than Paul is here. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

II

THE SPIRAL ROAD

"Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."—DEUT. 17:16.

ISRAEL is en-route from Egypt to Canaan. Many and grievous have been their sins, and grievous and many were their woes. The long journey is nearing its end. And now, "on this side Jordan" still, the land of promise yet unattained though near at hand, Moses addresses the people, and recounts their wanderings. He reminds them of their many blessings, as well as their losses and sorrows. He sums up the law. He counsels and warns, he cheers and encourages. He reminds them that the land before them is to be their possession; and that, even should they choose a king, his royal command could not bring them back along this journey. He says that God Himself has forbidden their return.

"Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."

Bearing in mind these words of Moses, and thinking of ourselves as on a journey, let us to-day consider what is the nature of that journey, and

whither we are hastening. The text forbids us to think we shall ever return over this roadway of to-day. It warns us that we are pilgrims and sojourners, and can tarry but for a night.

In the world's get-nowhere philosophy we are taught that life is a treadmill, a ceaseless grind; going ever, but never arriving; that we are dust and to dust we shall return, and there's an end of it.

In his essay on "Circles," Emerson works out elaborately the thought that all things move in orbits, returning invariably whence they started. He says, "The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second, and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end."

It would seem then that our little lives are confined to small orbits; that we gyrate around some power which holds us; and that, sooner or later, we come back to the very spot from which we started. Man begins as a child, and returns to second childhood. He springs from the dust, and goes back to the dust. Thus it is said he fulfills the little orbit or circle of his life. We are told that should a man start walking due westward, or due eastward, or northward, or southward, and continue in the same direction, he would, were there no seas to intercept, return to the very spot he had left. Thus it is sought to prove that life is a circle.

But this is not all. The New England sage goes

further with his get-nowhere philosophy. He says in another sentence "Our life is apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn. There is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on midnoon, and under every deep a lower deep opens." This eloquent passage presents life as extremely prescribed in its powers. We never arrive, yet we are ever moving. Nay, we have no object or end in view. Why should we? Destined always to return to the selfsame spot, and circumscribed by greater and more powerful circles, it is equally impossible to leave our orbits or to reach any goal by following them.

It is certainly a fascinating thought that around all little circuits and orbits, as space surrounds all suns and systems, the great Circle holds its own mighty sway. Yet we feel the circle theory of life is inadequate, misleading, incorrect. We shall, therefore, complete the figure used by the great essayist, or rather substitute another which we feel is at once more scientific in its accuracy and also more true in that which it seeks to illustrate. Our text states definitely that we pass this way no more. Another text tells us we do indeed arrive. Our pathway, it says, "shines more and more unto the perfect day." We reach a somewhere, and that somewhere is a perfect, an endless day.

We do not pass the same roadway, in the same direction, to the same end, in the same way, any two times. We are never coming back to the same conditions or even to the same place. You say "I return to my home every evening. I find that home just where I left it." Is it where you left it? It is a sober fact that it is thousands of miles from where it was when you left to come to this church to-day. The movement of the earth, on its axis and in its orbit, has changed its position tremendously and irrevocably. It is incorrect to say that the revolution of the earth brings it again to the same spot to-day at noon which it occupied yesterday at noon; for while the earth rotates on its axis, it is also revolving in its orbit. It is shooting around the sun at a net rate of nineteen miles a second, or one and one half million miles a day. At noon to-day, your house, your city, your whole continent, your world are a million and a half miles from where you and they were yesterday.

It is likewise incorrect to say that when the five hundred eighty-four million miles of the earth's orbit have been covered, our planet returns to the same spot. We are not to-day exactly where we were at noon one year ago to-day, for, while the earth has made its revolution, and has come back to its relative position with regard to the sun, that sun itself, with all its retinue of worlds and satel-

lites, has plunged forward through space at a tremendous, inconceivable, if not incalculable, rate of speed.

Wherefore, it is a literal, scientific fact that we do not go over the same ground or in the old beaten track, or follow the circuit back to its beginning. Not once, from the time the world as a flaming fire-ball first bowled out into space to this present moment in this year of grace, has it ever occupied the same position which it occupied a moment before. Instead of moving in circles that are circumscribed by greater circles, the whole is one vast amazing system of spiral movements, upward or downward or outward, into the eternal solitary spaces controlled and governed by the Eternal God.

This is true in the intellectual as it is in the physical world. The thoughts of to-day are not and cannot be the thoughts of to-morrow, for the thoughts of to-day contain also the impressions, the accretions, the cosmic star-dust of the world of infinite ideas, that have sifted down into our beings to-day. Intellectually, we shall return this way no more; intellectually, God makes all things new. He may use old matter in making it new; He does use it; but none the less the old has passed away. The movements of the human intellect are progressive: not circular but spiral.

We speak of time as though it were continuous:

"the river of time." Not so! Each moment is as some golden grain of wheat dropped from the storehouses of eternity; and, once fallen, is never again to form a part of time. Other grains may in their turn come, until the great storehouses are exhausted and the last grain has fallen, but one after another they come; one after another they fall, disappear, pass away.

These lives of ours are moving onward. We are not "statues chiseled from the marble of which gods are made." We are living souls, growing souls, mounted upon a planet which is moving ceaselessly. "Creatures of time?" Well, if so, of a time, which, though it may have beginning, shall have no end. We are not *what* we were a year ago any more than we are *where* we were.

We are forced by this very nature of things to be forever moving,—not moving in little circles and coming back to the same spot, but moving in spirals. This spiral motion must for us be upward or downward. Let us look about us then on this day. Let us ask ourselves, "In what direction has our motion been during the year that is past? Are we better men and women than we were a year ago, or are we worse?" For I say again that we have not moved in a circle, we are not at the same place. Are we nearer God than we were a year ago, or

are we farther away? Again I repeat, we have not returned to the old place.

There are practical thoughts we may bring forward to-day in connection with this proposition that we shall not return this way again: The past is irrevocably gone. We cannot rely upon it. We cannot live upon its food. We cannot rest upon its successes. We should not grow disconsolate over its losses. The past year is as truly now a matter of history as was a year when Napoleon was shaking the thrones of Europe, or a year when savages were burning the homes and scalping the settlers in the wilds of America, or a year when the scholars were working upon this venerable English Bible; or any other year in the past ages. Since it is thus irrevocably past, I repeat that we must not hope to live in it, or with it. Likewise the sermons to which we have listened in the past; the passages in the Holy Scripture which we have read and dwelt upon; the prayers in which we have taken a part; the work we have done in the missionary society; or any other of the spiritual or religious exercises in which we have engaged in this past year, and which have been in one sense or another our spiritual food—these things will not strengthen us in the year which is before us, unless we continue to partake of that which our souls need.

Nor can we rely upon the success of the past.

One can never afford to feel that he has attained and that, therefore, he may rest upon his laurels. No one can say "my class in the Sunday School was a great success last year and, therefore, I can retire from the work henceforth." No one can say, "I helped to make the prayer meeting a success last year and now I can retire." No one can afford to say, "I helped to meet the expenses of this organization, and made its business a success during the past year, and, therefore, I can now retire." No man can act upon any such principle as this. In case one should, then inevitable defeat would follow, because if one will not go forward, he must go backward. Do you recall the humorous remark of the old negro, who was weary of people living in the past? He had heard enough about ancestral glories to suit his taste. He expressed his opinion in the homely but illuminating figure: "Whenever I hears folks braggin' 'bout deir ancestors, I allers thinks de bes' part uv dat pertater patch am in de groun'." Homely as is the figure it certainly illustrates this great truth—that we must live our own lives and not the lives of those who have passed before.

On the other hand we need never revive the misfortunes of the past or its mistakes, whether they are ours or someone's else. The only sane use we can make of these mistakes is to see to it that

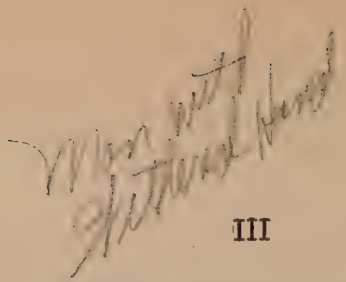
they do not occur again if they are our mistakes, or to see to it that we are willing to overlook them if they are the mistakes of others. The year is before us. Of the past year it can be truly said "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness"; and of the year before us, "It, too, will be in His hands." As fair a lily as ever grew on mountain slopes will grow there again. As sweet a rose as ever blushed in a garden will bloom again. As cloudless a morning as ever rose over the world will rise again. As fine thoughts as ever came to us should come again. As great joys as have ever been granted should be regranted, and will be.

We have a new year: that is the beginning of our blessings. A year ago we had a new year. God made it new and He filled it with new blessings, new experiences, new joys, new hopes and aspirations. He will fill this one just as He filled the last, save that it will be with new blessings; and He will crown it with loving-kindness and tender mercies.

In this new year, let us remember we are not to pass the same way we passed a year ago. Hence let us not try to live upon the successes and joys which came then. Surely let us not revive, or endeavor to revive, the sorrows and disappointments of the past. Each day, each hour, each moment of this new year is a precious gift to us from the

hand of our Father. We can so accept and use these gifts that, when the new year has become the old, we shall have no cause to feel we have despised or wasted what has been given—hence shall not be forced to mourn over the irrevocable past.

In this new year, let us be found climbing upwards, as when one climbs the mountains—or rather as the stars roll forward to their definite though unknown goal, in their stately orbits. If our spiral is upward, Godward, let us not forget that this unretraceable track along which life flies is slowly bringing us from outer darkness to that perfect day, wherein we shall reach our goal at the foot of "the great white throne."



III

WOUNDED IN THE SWORD ARM

"There was a man whose right hand was withered."—LUKE 6:6.

THE poor fellow's power was limited.

In former days, when railroads were less prosperous, and their rolling stock not so well kept up as to-day, it was no unusual thing to see a locomotive in the condition known to railroad men as "on one side." A cylinder-head had blown out, a piston-rod had broken, a side-rod had dropped off: the trainmen had plugged up the steam-chest and removed all the connecting parts. The locomotive was then put to "her job." "She" could draw a load, once started; but she was powerless to start if her one good side had stopped on "dead center." Even when started, her power was limited.

Although we are not so purely mechanical as a locomotive, and although the loss of one organ often quickens and strengthens others, still no one will assert that we are as well off with one hand as with two. We are limited, in some measure, despite higher skill in the other hand.

The man of our text was one of those whose power is below normal. We are not told that he appealed to Jesus to be made whole, but we are told that Jesus healed him—making his withered hand as sound and well as the other. This was done despite the bigoted attitude of the scribes and Pharisees, who preferred the withered hand to a breach of the letter of the Law.

Our Lord's miracles always had a parabolic significance. There were and are spiritual lessons to be drawn from this one of the healed hand. Any evil which fastens itself upon us, limits our powers precisely as the barnacles make a ship sail more slowly, or as a withered hand limits our output of high-class work.

The Bible presents sin under so many different aspects that it is impossible for anyone to speak of it in all these aspects at one time. In the New Testament there are quite a few different words and phrases used for sin. Some of them are very interesting. One of them means sin as a habit, as a state of being; another, sin as a power; another, sin as a transgression or a trespass, that is to say, going where one is forbidden; another means a fall, a declination, a coming-down; another means iniquity, something that is inherently, disgustingly wrong. There is still another which means lawlessness, and yet another which means blindness.

In addition to these words or phrases which, within themselves, contain the ideas of sin, we have it pictured for us in other forms and under various guises. Sin is a leprosy, that is to say, something that is not only deadly to the one who has it, but highly contagious. Or, sin is a palsy, that is to say, something that not only points toward complete destruction of the body, but which also renders the life useless and miserable, even before death comes to relieve the sufferer. Our present view is, *sin is limitation.* The philosopher Leibnitz wrote of sin as though it were *mere* limitation, merely not coming up to the fullness of our being. Now, this is one, but not the only view of sin. There is "transgression of the law of God" as well as "want of conformity unto" it. But we are concerned with the latter aspect.

Here is a man whose hand is withered, "dried up." When our Saviour pronounced a curse on the fig tree it dried up. When He was describing the growth of seed which fell in shallow soil, He said that because it had no root, when the sun beat upon it, it withered. The man's hand was dried up like a withered leaf. Why? Because of lack of vital connection between the sources of physical life and the affected parts. In the case of the withered hand it may have been because of some accident, or it may have been a condition that existed

from birth; or some disease may have begun in a small way and gradually increased until the hand had lost its form, had become a withered, ugly, dead thing.

What keeps your hand in its present shape? You answer me that particles of food for the decaying tissues are brought by the blood through the various arteries, and then disseminated into every minutest part of the hand by the capillary blood vessels. Now, if the supply of blood is cut off, the hand will wither and die. If the supply of blood is even limited, the hand will grow sickly. There may have been, as I say, a condition in this man's hand existing from birth. The main artery in the arm or at the wrist may have been deformed, and sufficient blood could not pass through. Nature may have failed to supply the lesser arteries or have made them so small that sufficient blood could not penetrate. The hand may have been crushed, or burned, or some disease may have attacked it, and little by little hardened or narrowed the arteries until the hand became a withered one.

A well-grounded tradition asserts that the man whom Jesus thus healed was a stonemason. In this case, injury may have been sustained while plying his trade; or it may well have been partial paralysis due to excesses and irregular living, which caused his trouble. In any case, he is now withered as to

his right hand, his best tool and instrument for working at his trade, and is in a pitiable condition.

He cannot do as much work as the man with two hands. Not only is he incapable of doing as much work but he does not enjoy the avocations of life as another man whose hands are both whole would enjoy them. He is *limited in his labors* and he is *limited in his pleasures.* He can neither handle the tools of the workshop so well, nor can he handle the golf sticks, the tennis rackets, baseball bats, or other instruments or tools of sport.

Precisely this same thing is true of sin. Sin is a limitation. It is a limitation that may have existed all our days. We all have such limitations. Practically everybody questions the "laws of heredity" and yet we cannot escape the belief that there is truth in them. The Decalogue says God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children three or four generations down; and we know that there are predispositions in the human body to certain forms of evil. The man who has these predispositions is in that sense a man with a withered hand, and both his usefulness and his pleasures are limited until he has been cured.

Again, some form of sin may start early in life. He may have had no hereditary inclination in that direction, but he was started in it by some vicious or careless nurse or companion. Little by little the

habit grew upon him until it became a vigorous and formidable thing, and his whole life has been warped and crippled and limited by it.

Or again, more or less frequently a man's life may be blasted, his usefulness withered, by some sudden calamitous sin. His previous career may have been on the whole a noble struggle against evil and vice, and suddenly some great temptation may have arisen into which he fell, and henceforth his usefulness was withered.

Let us think of these things. If there is something in our lives that makes for this limitation by sin, you and I should examine carefully to find where the trouble lies, and then we should go to the Physician for our healing, so that we shall no longer be limited in our usefulness, or our enjoyment. I say limited in our usefulness, for we all know that the better and truer a man is, the more useful he is. Who are the men we honor most, all other things being equal? Are they not the best, the most honest, the truest, the most just men? In fact, is it not often the case that the most honored man in your community is a man who is vitally in touch with the churches and with their work? Fancy to yourself such a man now, say an officer in some of our prominent churches. Let him have all the qualifications to fill his high office and to be a great help and a great source of comfort to

the community; if this man permits hereditary tendencies to grow upon him day after day,—for instance, if he becomes miserly and grasping and greedy instead of merely thrifty and saving—his hand, his spiritual hand, is withering.

It is not without significance that it was this man's *right* hand which was withered. The right hand is usually the more useful of the two. Hence this touch shows the special pitifulness and helplessness of this poor fellow. In that day a man who lacked physical qualifications would suffer even more than he would to-day; for now he might engage in some other work where his withered hand would not be required for all his duties. Suppose the man of our story had not always been afflicted as at present. Suppose he had been trained to work with this hand, work of some skill; the Orientals do many beautiful and artistic things. But some disease attacked his arteries, and now the right hand hangs useless, like some dead limb broken from the main trunk of a tree, swinging there by a torn ligament or two, beaten and battered by every wind that blows. You say he is a pitiful object, the more so than if he had never been able to use the hand.

Here is the point: Sin is sure to attack you in your most useful power. As it was this man's *right* hand that was affected, so also you will be struck

in the power of greatest usefulness. Are you a teacher? Sin will rob you of your patience and gentleness, will make you less effective and less acceptable as a teacher. At the same time it will take away your influence and your standing in the community, so that people will not desire to have a man or woman like you to teach their children. It withers your right hand.

Are you employed in a bank? It will whisper that you are dishonest. You are known to gamble. It will be noised abroad, "Does this man gamble with his own, or with other people's money?" Sin attacks you there. The officers and directors of the bank no longer trust you. Your position is taken away from you. It strikes you in your *right* hand.

Are you the mother in a household? Sin hardens your heart and fills your life with other than right and true things; shuts you out from your husband's counsels; takes away your ability to guide and direct your children aright. It withers your right hand.

It makes no difference what your sphere in life is, be you student, physician, bookkeeper, salesman, clergyman, or be you engaged in any other kind of occupation, sin will cripple your right hand.

Perhaps it is already crippling you. Perhaps that is the reason you are no more acceptable in your work than you are. Perhaps that is the reason

you do not rise in your business. Perhaps that is the reason the community gives you no higher social standing. Did you not see in the papers how an actress, who married an unlawfully divorced man of millions, is reported as saying that the castles and carriages, the footmen and flowers, and other costly things which her husband's money can buy for her, have not made her happy because the best people have not given her the social position she desired and expected as the wife of such a wealthy man. Perhaps, I say, your failure to rise, or your lack of progress in any direction, may be due to the fact that your right hand is withered by sin.

This is true of your usefulness, and it is also true of your enjoyment. Perhaps you are not happy because sin has withered your right hand.

In this story the man's hand is cured. There was a Great Physician who said to him "Stretch forth thy hand." The man's hand is stretched forth, and it becomes whole like the other. If sin has withered your spiritual right hand I name to you again the name of this Great Physician, who can cure it, make it sound and well, make it whole like unto the other.

At one period of his life John B. Gough was genius in ruins. He was a bloated sot, staggering about the streets of his native town. Within him were the possibilities of becoming one of the great-

est platform orators of his age; but his right hand was withered. Nobody would care to listen to the orations of a drunken wretch. But one day he saw his hand was withered; he went to the Great Physician; he prayed for his hand to be cured, and his right hand was made whole and became as strong as any man's. He entered into a new sphere of usefulness and of enjoyment, and for many years he stood forth as the foremost advocate, in America or in the world, of a clean and a temperate life. The same thing may be true of you and me. We may not have sunk so low as John B. Gough. We may not have within us the native powers, or to use our metaphor, the skillful right hand he had. But we all have some powers, we all have some usefulness, and this usefulness is crippled by our sinful lives. Let us bring them to the Great Physician and have them made strong and well so that we can use them for the glory of God and the good of our fellow men.

"He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

IV

THE DIVINE URGE

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden."—GEN. 3:23.

IN science as well as in religion, it is unsafe to dogmatize. We may, however, use scientific theories by way of illustration. We may also borrow semi-scientific terms. Thus, we hear much to-day of the "cosmic urge." It is said that there is an energy, unknown and unknowable, behind every electron, every atom, every entity, yea in and behind every world and flaming sun and star, which will let nothing rest. Some scientists affirm that there is no such thing as absolute rest, that in what seems to us solidest steel or coldest marble every smallest particle is in motion. Behind the cosmos, there is this silent, irresistible, furious power which cannot be evaded, which cannot be appeased. It drives more relentlessly than the Egyptian taskmasters who beat the Israelites to tales of brick without straw. This incessant fury, I fancy, is what we call the cosmic urge.

We human beings can observe very little of what

takes place in the realm of atoms and electrons. The smallest things we can observe carefully are germs and insects; and we see that the insect has scarce begun its little life, when it starts out along a very restless way. We see the bird, scarce out of the egg, begin its lifelong flight. We know the young lion is hardly whelped before he begins those prowlings through forest and desert, which shall cease only with his life. In each case the cosmic urge seems to be as powerful in the realm of the organic as in the realm of the inorganic. And even when the organic life is ended by what we call death, science comes forth to say that the cosmic urge does not cease, that every atom and every electron of what we call the firefly, the eagle, or the lion, that these smallest particles do not stop, but under changing conditions move on in orbits as sure, as definitely marked, perhaps, as that in which our planet rolls about the sun.

Viewed as a physical organism, that is, as an animated aggregation of electrons, all this is true of man. He goes forth to his labors until the sun sets and the shadows fall. In common with the firefly and eagle and lion, he is, from the first feeble motions in his mother's womb, to the last flickering of his eyelids as they close in death, full of that restlessness, that uneasiness, that universal push, that cosmic urge, which says "Move on."

Natural law does not fail to have an analogy in the spiritual world even here. This is evident when we look at ourselves not merely as organisms, but rather as spiritual beings, for we have not only the cosmic urge upon our physical bodies, yea, upon the very electrons which compose our bodies, but there is also a Divine urge, a God-made compulsion on these spirits of ours, making them more restless than the bodies in which they have their temporary dwellings. As one of our poets has sung:

> "These hearts of ours, how wild, how wild!
> They are as hard to tame as an Indian child.
> Build them a bright and beautiful home—
> They will soon grow weary and want to roam."

Whatever may have been the original intent of our Creator, whether His divine purpose was primarily that the race should remain forever in Edenic innocency and bliss, we know not. But we do know that innocency was destroyed, and that bliss was broken. We do know there came a day when the voice of God, when the Divine compulsion, pointed to the gates and uttered that command which man could not disobey—"Go forth."

There are two ways of considering religious life, and there are corresponding groups who look upon spiritual life from these two different viewpoints. There are those who hold that our natures, spirit-

ually, if not physically, are created for rest, for repose. To such, the religious life means entering into a kind of "saints' rest." The figures in the Bible which represent God as a guardian, as a fortress, as a mighty rock, as one who spreads His wings and shelters from all harm those who trust in Him—these figures appeal to such as none of the more strenuous and warlike figures of the Bible do appeal. For they believe the end and aim of religion is perfect safety, and therewith perfect repose and bliss. The phrase most often upon the lips of such is "Saved unto happiness" or "Entering into our rest." We do not say that these friends have an erroneous conception of religion, we simply say they have a one-sided conception; for religion, as it is taught us in the Old Testament and in the New, is a matter of life; and life is not rest but motion, not ease but endeavor, not stagnation, but persistent and determined effort. To use the figure which comes naturally along with our text: religion does not open again the gates of that Eden from which we have been driven. Not only were our early father and mother driven forth and prevented from returning, but none of their sons and daughters, so far as there is any record, has ever gone back; and the cherubim and flaming sword guard as effectively and as irresistibly to-day as they did in the long ago. But, say some, is not

this contrary to the teaching of natural religion? Is it not true that in religion we enter again into an estate of bliss which makes for a happiness equal to that from which we were driven? We do not deny when it is put in this form. It may equal, or be greater even, than the happiness and bliss from which we had previously been shut out, but the point here is that we never go back.

There is the Eden of babyhood, or early childhood. Oftentimes when we are weary, when we are sad with the apparently heartless buffetings of the world, when men have been uncharitable and cruel towards us, we have sat down at the close of the day, and we have wished with all our hearts we might be transported back to the old home, to the old fireside, the old paternal roof, to those golden evenings when in our father's home we enjoyed the Eden of childhood, and we cry with the poet:

> "Backward, turn backward, O time, in your flight;
> Make me a child again, just for tonight.
> Mother, come back from that echoless shore,
> Take me in your arms again, just as of yore.
> Over my cradle your loving watch keep,
> Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep."

But though we cry until our voice ascend above the roofs and spires of the city, and above the clouds of the night, yea until they are lost in the abysses

amongst the stars, that which we ask is impossible. Time does not turn backward in its flight, mother does not come from that echoless shore; and were she to come she could not take us, gray-haired women and bearded men, and rock us to sleep as she did in our babyhood. That Eden is closed and in the providence of God it is well that it is. We do not want to surrender any of our dignity, of our duty, of our responsibilities, if we are real men and women. We do not want, except in our most sentimental moments, to be babes once more. No; we have come out of that. It was an Eden and as we look back to it now, it is all haloed with rainbow glories, all bespangled with jewels of delight, and all odorous with the heaviest of perfumes: but it is an Eden for babes and little children, and not an Eden for men and women who have work to do in this work-a-day world. Religion, dear friends is not repose; entrance into a godly life is not reëntrance into a workless Eden, however rich its fruitage, however beautiful its bloom. Salvation is not slumbering, even though that slumber should be seraph guarded.

No matter in what Eden we may rest for a time the Divine urge comes, and from that Eden we are sent forth. It may not be the Eden of babyhood, to which we longingly look back; it may be the Eden of youth with all its high ambitions, with all its

beliefs in the future, with its cloud-capped, airy, sacred castles, now long since shrunken into the clay hovels of reality. But neither is this the thing to which we return when we come into a religious life, nor any of the other Edens to which we look back to-day.

The other way to look upon the religious life is that it is a call to service. The Divine urge is not the whip of a heartless being unwilling to let the poor miserable creature rest for an hour. The Divine urge is rather the compulsion of a wise and just Father who plans that we shall accomplish the most that is possible for ourselves, for our fellows, and for Him. It is said that amongst the ancient Carthaginians, political prisoners were sometimes condemned to a torturous death. It was not by nailing them to the cross, though that was known amongst the Punic peoples. It was not slow starvation. It was not the thumbscrew, nor the application of tiny fires, though all these were known and used; but the unfortunate wretch was condemned to be kept awake until he dropped, through sheer exhaustion, into death. Slaves were set to scourge him sufficiently to keep him awake. If ever he was seen to close his eyes, these slaves would do something to waken him. They were relieved by other slaves, as sentinels on duty. Let the poor creature be so wearied, so exhausted for

lack of sleep that he fell in a heap on the dungeon floor, strong arms lifted him and set him on his feet again, and he was punched and pinched and pounded and slapped and stung until he awoke. And long after his exhaustion was so great that he could not stand on his feet, the sad wretch was still not permitted to sleep. There was no peace, not one moment, until the merciful relief of death.

Now this is not the figure under which we must view the Divine compulsion. God is our Father, not our taskmaster, and the only way in which an illustration like the preceding can in any sense be applied to our Father's divine compulsion, is when we think that it is to keep us awake in order that we should not sleep the sleep of death. Branded into my memory is an incident which occurred in the place where my father lived when I was a child of nine years. A neighbor had been found under the influence of morphine. By mistake he had taken a very large dose of the drug. When I heard of it, though I knew nothing of the meaning of the terms, childish curiosity sent me, with the other boys, to the neighbor's house; and standing around the fence of the back yard I watched the physicians, the man's sons and his daughter, and his wife, cruelly beat this man and dash cold water on him, walk him up and down, when he seemed so sick and weak that the merciful thing would be to put him

into bed and let him rest. But there was impressed forcefully upon me at that time the knowledge that if this man had been allowed to sleep it would have been to let him die. There are times when stillness will mean sleep and sleep will mean death. Now stagnation in religious life means spiritual sleep and spiritual death. There is always the kindness and mercy of God behind this Divine compulsion which drives us forth from the Eden of rest.

Look how God has called the great prophets, the mighty spiritual leaders, and said to them, "Come out! Come out of your Eden. Come out of your ark, your ease, your bliss, your rest. Come out and go where I will show you." The Divine reveille has sounded and it calls as some trumpet on the last day. It cries to everyone "Lo! it is the dawn! Go forth, O man, to your labor until the evening." Thus spoke God, when with an irresistible, but gentle touch, He pushed forth the man and his wife from the Garden. Thus spake He when He called unto Noah resting in the ark, "Go forth from the ark." We read that after the confusion at Babel, lest men should content themselves with some earthly heaven, and with the cloud-capped towers they had constructed, His divine compulsion came and "from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." We read again how His

voice came to one in a rich and populous country, to one of rich and powerful family, and "the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of this country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." We read how this same God called to one who for forty years had rested far from the madding crowd, in the desert of Midian. The world with its noise, its clamor of battle, and its bloodshed was in the distance, but that same God with His divine urge came, and in the burning bush Jehovah said unto Moses in Midian "Go!" Again we read how when the army is encamped on the other side of the Jordan, the easy thing would have been to let it remain there encamped forever, but the voice of Jehovah comes to Joshua, "Arise, go," and the Divine compulsion drives him over the Jordan. "Go," says this same God unto Gideon, "Go, and save Israel." "Go," says He unto Saul; "be thou a leader of my people." He says to David, "Go up and out of Bethlehem, and away from the sheepcotes of Jesse." Yea, to the mighty ones, to Zerubbabel, to Nehemiah, to Ezra, "Get out of Babylon. Go." The same message came to all the prophets of Israel. He said to Jeremiah, "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem." To Ezekiel He said, "Eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel." To Hosea He said, "Go and bring my message to my people."

To Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh." It is always the divine command: "Forward march."

Onward, upward, this is not your place. This Eden has served for to-day, it will not do for to-morrow.

And when we open the New Testament we find therein no warranty for ease and idleness; we do not find a proclamation of stagnation; we do not find an assurance that we already have attained. We do not find a guarantee that we may fold our hands and sleep. In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, there is still the God compulsion, the Divine urge. But now it is in a different form. It is no longer "Go forth," but it is "Come hither." The keyword of the entire ancient Scriptures is "GO." The keyword of the New Testament is "COME." We have heard the "Go," let us now hear the "Come." The Divine compulsion no longer drives, but draws. It no longer pushes, it pulls. It no longer whips, it woos. And that is because Shiloh has come, and that One toward whom all had been propelled is here so that He can make the invitation "COME." He passes by the seashore and sees men in their boats fishing or mending their nets. "Leave your nets," says He; "Come, follow me." He passes by the customs house and speaks to the taxgatherer, "Come, follow me." He meets the physician hurrying towards

his patients, and says "Turn your face from the sick, from the dying; follow me." He stretches out His hands over the weary multitude, "Come unto me," says He, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Come," says He to the mothers, "bring your little children to me." "Come," says He to the rich young ruler, "yet lackest thou one thing: sell all thou hast, . . . and come, follow me." This message is caught up and borne by all the apostles until in those last glowing pages of Holy Writ, we hear that last glowing, beautiful invitation, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. . . . And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." This Central Figure in all the world, toward whom God urged the prophets and patriarchs of ancient times, now draws us with a wooing that is irresistible. COME. The Divine compulsion which drove from the one side, now draws from the other. It is no longer Go, for even when the words of the great compulsion fell from His lips "Go ye, and preach the Gospel," He immediately makes it a "Come with me, and preach the Gospel" for He says, "Lo, I am with you alway."

O souls, restless, weary, worn and sad, looking back to some Eden from which you have been driven, wherein you walked and talked and basked in the sunlight with someone you loved, have you

not heard that irresistible, that all-wooing Voice, which said to you "Go forward" calling you also "Come unto me"? O you who look back and wring your hands and long to enter once more into some Eden whose high walls and flame-guarded gates forbid, hear you this: "In Christ shall all be made alive." "In Christ shall all be restored." "To-day," said He to the thief on the cross, and He alone could say it, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Every Divine compulsion "Go forth" is to drive us from selfish or self-full content, into a union with Him. When the mighty gates of Eden swung to, when God's voice rang in man's ear "Go forth," if he could only have heard with his spirit, and if he had only known the full meaning of the command, there would have been another word along with it; not simply "Go forth to till the earth" but also "Go forth to find your Saviour." Abraham, Noah, Moses, Saul, David, Isaiah, all these saw but dimly and afar off, but all were divinely urged onward to the Christ.

Wherefore, let us be brave, and let us be faithful. Let us hear again the GO as men might hear it, that we may also hear the COME as children hear the calling voice of mother as the twilight shadows fall.

God drives you and me out from petty, man-made, earth-furnished Edens; and at the same time

woos and draws us through His compelling invitations that we may "leave the low-vaulted past," and may enter into more stately mansions; yea that we may enter, through His Son, into eternal habitations.

Come; "and the Spirit and the bride say come."

V

PETER BOUND

"Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains."—Acts 12:6.

WHY was Peter sleeping between two soldiers, and bound with two chains? The answer to this question is a statement of our theme. He was bound with chains because he had done good to men. Now that sounds like a right cynic's wail. We may be sure, however, that it is not cynicism. It is merely a statement of fact. The Apostle had cured Æneas of his paralysis. He had returned Dorcas to her friends, and sent her again on her mission of good works. He had had his vision in which a revelation had come that the Gospel was not to be confined to the Jews but was for all men, in that "God is no respecter of persons." He had preached a sermon, and his hearers, together with himself, had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Following these things, Herod, the king, put forth his hand and killed James, the brother of John, and seized Peter and thrust him into prison. Hence, as we have said, it was literally for doing good that he was in chains.

If those that work evil are in power and authority, the deeds of a just man are so great a rebuke to them that they long to get him out of their way. He is an offense to their eyes.

Thus it was with Peter. Thus it has been so often in human history that we may set it down as a rule. Were there some way to discover the facts of other worlds, perhaps we should find the same true there. Certain it is that when men pictured the actions of imaginary demi-gods and gods, they fancied these beings as following this same moral law. For instance, in the story of Prometheus Bound.

For no lack of Biblical illustration, but rather to use an acknowledgedly mythical story to illustrate how true to human nature are the facts in this incident of Peter's life, will you permit me to relate, and then refer freely to that classic myth?

Prometheus was one of the Titans, that huge race of demi-gods who inhabited the earth before the coming of man. His brother Epimetheus was bestowing gifts upon all creatures: wings to the birds, a shell to the tortoise, fins to the fishes, and so on. Coming at last to man, his lavish generosity had left nothing to bestow upon humanity. He appealed to his brother, Prometheus, who filched fire from the altar of Jove and gave it to man. This gift made man the world's sovereign. With fire he could warm his house and hence could live in all

climes; he could forge metal, and hence superior weapons were his with which to conquer animals. With fire he could work a thousand arts. Now when Jove heard this, his anger against Prometheus was very great. He therefore commanded Vulcan, the smith of the gods, to take Prometheus and bind him with chains in some out-of-the-way place; and he sent a vulture to prey forever upon the Titan's vitals. Taking Strength and Force with him to carry out their lord's command, Vulcan dragged Prometheus to a storm-rent chasm far up the "rocky, unclomb heights" of Mount Caucasus in "the Scythian track, the desert without man." Here was Prometheus fastened, and here he suffered for his crime, which was nothing more than "his old trick of loving man."

Notice now our bound Apostle, yonder in the dungeon? It is a lonely, gloomy place. The soldiers are his keepers, his gaolers—not his friends. He is thrust off there alone. That seems to be our way of dealing with the great man whom we, the lesser ones, cannot comprehend: to confine him in some lonely dungeon, to drive him to some lonely desert. Peter's plight while thus bound may be illustrated further by reference to our ancient story.

Where was Prometheus chained? In the loneliest place the earth or the seas could afford. Mountain heights, through their very inaccessibility, have

always been symbolic of loneliness, and there is a height to which even the screaming eagle does not fly. Mists, thunders, bald crags, and chilling snows are the only earthly objects in these far heights. It was to such a place, where even sympathy could scarce follow, that Strength and Force dragged the chained Titan, and there to some huge cloud-moistened boulder they fastened him.

How like is this to Peter's loneliness! How like to the loneliness of so many of earth's benefactors! One might almost say that, in proportion to their selfless lives, the saints have trod the lonely ways. A selfish world does not understand the unselfish. Unselfishness rebukes selfishness. Unworldliness shames worldliness. Purity makes impurity blush. Small wonder then that the world hated those faithful Disciples of the Lord who went out in His name to preach good tidings and bear the gift of God to men. Small wonder that the world they went to bless forced them into the mountain fastness of loneliness, and finally thrust their worn bodies into the black abyss. That world beheaded James; it crucified Peter; it slew Paul with a sword, probably in the very shadow of the palace of Caesar; it ripped the martyrs limb from limb; it plucked out their eyes; it sawed them asunder; it burned them, to light orgies which made night hideous.

Peter was there by high command. But it was physical power, not spiritual, which held him. And because the soul is not subject to bonds and chains, because stony towers and walls of beaten brass and airless dungeons cannot imprison the free spirit, Peter was sure to be set free. In fact *he* was not in prison nor in chains. It was only Peter's body that was bound—as it was not Bunyan's mind which was shut up in Bedford jail. To leap again from fact to fiction—but fiction true to facts—it was not Prometheus' higher self, his true self, which Strength and Force, brute powers, welded to the crags. For the poet Shelley represents Prometheus as saying he had no great desire to quit that bleak ravine, and that if they were to pity anyone, they must

> "Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
> Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
> As light in the sun, throned."

"How hard" exclaims the thoughtless observer, "how hard to understand why Peter lies in chains! Why so good a man as James should be beheaded by so evil a man as Herod!" Why could such a philosopher, such a poet, such a preacher, such a benefactor as St. Paul fall by the enmity of the slaves of Nero? Why should John Hus, Jerome of Prague, why should Ridley and Latimer die, and such evil powers as Pope John XXIII and King

Henry VIII triumph over them? Why should so many of those who have toiled to lift man be mistreated, beaten, starved, imprisoned, maligned? These are questions that the thoughtful will ask. Let us remember that these great and good men did not suffer so much as we sometimes think. It is the craven spirit which suffers. The brave spirit nerves the weakest body beyond the sense of pain. Let us further remember that all the physical forces of punishment and destruction the world has known are (mysterious as it may seem) acting under the permission of the Almighty. Let us bear in mind that these things are material enemies and to be overcome by them is a very different thing from being overcome by spiritual enemies. Jesus hungered, the physical enemy pained him, but the spiritual enemy did not triumph.

Peter's body was set free by supernatural interposition, because his body was needed in the furtherance of Christ's kingdom. But had it been true that his greatest usefulness to that kingdom demanded his further incarceration, we feel sure he would have been the last to murmur. He could have gained release—he need not even have been in prison at all. He could have denied and forsworn his faith, his hope, his love for and in Jesus, and his prison doors would have been opened. But he was true to his Lord, whether the chains were

to drop off the next moment, or whether they were to be worn till the crack of doom swallowed them and him.

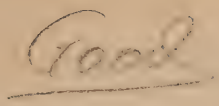
What martyr could not have bought an ignoble release from torture's grasp, or death's, by the ignominious price of denying his faith? Even in our pagan myth, the hero was too noble to buy release. The story is that he could have been free at any time by revealing a secret which he alone knew. But to do this would be to sell out to baser motives. He could not compromise his high worth by doing such a thing. He was suffering for a great deed, for blessing men, just as all martyrs have suffered for blessing men. The martyrs themselves, as we have said, could have sold out—could have bought their freedom by basely denying the things in which they believed, or by playing false to the Lord whom they loved.

It is not only true of those ancient times when martyrs were led into the arena, and while listening to the fierce roars of hungry wild beasts, and the fiercer and more unpitying jibes of a cruel populace, were told that by renunciation they might escape their martyrdom; it is also true in this present hour, that men may sell for temporary gratification, temporary pleasure, or even for a temporary whim, the principles for which they should die. You can sell out your honor, your honesty, your virtue,

your charity, your faith. The world stands ready to buy them all. It has its hands full of gold, and of pleasures, and of ease, and of all other things which it can give. It says to you, "Come now, don't be a fool. These spiritual things are worth nothing. They are all imaginary. Let me have them, and take these real things in their stead." But the noble man, like Peter, like Paul, like all the martyrs, says "*NO.*" The true man says: "Let me suffer, but let me keep my spiritual integrity. Let me weep, let me want, let me feel hunger and cold and privation, let me moulder in this prison, let me lie here on these bare rocks and feel the cold dews drop down my face; let me hear the ceaseless clanking of these earthly chains; let this vulture of unrequited affection, of unappreciated love, of misunderstood motive gnaw at my heart; but let me keep my character; let me hold to those principles by which I live and by which I expect to die. Night may come up with its garniture of stars; the day may disperse with retricked beams the morning frost; seasons may come and go; storms may sweep from the higher peaks and engulf me round; but though chained with mortal chains, my spirit is free and shall be the slave of no evil powers, and subject only to the laws of God."

But Peter's chains fell away. His prison doors were opened wide. He went forth free in body as

well as in spirit. Certainly we may be comforted by this and may feel and know that although we too may be chained like slaves,—to-morrow's dawn shall throw its light on free men—freed from sorrow, persecution and death.



VI

A MAGNIFICENT FAILURE

"And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father."—II CHRON. 9:31.

THUS closed the life of a great and famous king.

The funeral orations probably included no words except of highest praise. Had there been daily papers in Jerusalem, the morning *Tribune* would have appeared with inverted column rules, and pictures of His Majesty taken from early childhood up to the day of his death would have adorned every page. There would have been a symposium of eulogies from all the prominent citizens of Jerusalem, and wireless messages from the Queen of Sheba, the King of Tyre, and all the other potentates of the time. There would also have been announcement that Rehoboam, son and heir of the late lamented sovereign had been proclaimed king in his stead. In the synagogues the Rabbis would probably have exhausted Oriental imagery in setting forth the virtues and the glories of King Solomon.

Though our account of the effect made by Solo-

mon's death upon Jerusalem and Judea is modern in terminology, one need not doubt the truth of the picture in the main. Moreover, during the many centuries since that time people have continued to glorify this Hebrew ruler. It may come to us, therefore, as something of a shock to be told that, viewed by the standards of enlightened Christian times, the life of Solomon must in the main be called a failure.

Now people are not interested in failures unless they show how one may succeed. The abiding interest one feels in the ruins of the Forum and the Parthenon is due not so much to their constantly reminding us of their own decay, but rather because they remind us of the strength and power, the success of those great peoples who first builded them. If a story of failure can be told so as to point out to us where we may avoid those mistakes which made for failure, then it is of intense and abiding interest to us. The melancholy conclusion written just above the word "finis" in the biographies of many of earth's most famous men is interesting to us largely because it points a moral and adorns a tale.

There is a way in which the career of Solomon is one of unqualified success. His was the Augustan age of Hebrew history. David, the Julius Caesar of his time, had conquered Israel's foes,

and had won a wide-felt respect for his powers. Dying, he had left a rich and magnificent kingdom to his son. David forbore to build a temple with his own hands. He believed those hands, stained with blood, were unworthy to construct a temple to the living God. Prophetic of his son's career, or at least expressive of his wish for that son, the warlike king had named him "Solomon," or "Peaceful." In the career of Solomon we find that in one way his name is indicative of his character, if by peace we mean absence of war. Some captious and revolutionary orator of Solomon's day, some Hebrew Patrick Henry, might have made the charge that absence of war, at least absence of war against foreign powers, is by no means the *summum bonum* of a nation. It is entirely possible to have base and ignominious peace, as it is possible to have unholy and unjust wars. We do not say that the peace of Solomon's reign was base and ignoble. On the contrary it was a glorious peace, devoted to a glorious cause. Viewed from the standpoint of Solomon's time his whole reign was a glorious success. In judging anyone's life, however, there are other things to be considered besides his official objective acts.

Richard III. of England made his way to the throne over the proverbial sea of blood. Infanticide, fratricide, regicide, uxoricide, amicocide

and every other form of murder, has been charged against him, as well as perjuries and treasons that in themselves were most heinous. Near the close of his career, frightened by specters, he himself said, "My conscience hath a thousand several tongues, and every tongue brings in a several tale, and every tale condemns me for a villain." Yet in the official acts of this monstrous sovereign, no English king, we are assured by the historian, has ever deserved more admiration from the common people for what he did for them. Hence we see that although we are accustomed to judge a man's character and his acts as one and the same thing, so that it is hard to discover any good in the villain or any evil in the hero, there is still a difference between the successful and meritorious performance of one's public and official duties and the private character of the performer. We should not care to argue that there is not a taint to a good act by a bad hand. If our Congregational friends actually believed Mr. Rockefeller's millions were tainted, they were logical, if not practical, in refusing a gift from him. Yet we leave it with you to answer if the most tainted of all tainted moneys will not buy coal to warm the shivering and bread to feed the hungry, and medicine to alleviate the pain of the world's poor? Perhaps the tears of the widow and the orphan could wash all taint from even a rob-

ber's gold? This is another way of saying "God can use even unworthy means to accomplish worthy ends." Though not believing in the principle that the end justifies the means, we none the less agree that all God's agents, save Jesus alone, have been more or less imperfect, and therefore unworthy agents.

In Germany one's philosophy need not be one's religion, as witness Professor Harnack of our own time, who, I am told, is decidedly evangelical in his preaching, but who, in his theology, rather shocks some of the more conservative. We do not separate religion and theology, in America, but such a separation is possible, as is seen in this case.

Now apply this general thought to Solomon and we can see that, successful as was his reign, glorious as were his accomplishments, he was none the less a failure as a man. Perhaps we may go farther and call him one of the most gigantic failures in all history. His was a great kingdom, his was untold wealth. He had the love of his people, possessed great talents and a wonderful intellect, his judgment and decision were admirable, and his wisdom proverbial. We will review some reasons for believing him this failure.

When a twig falls no one notes it, but when a giant pine thunders to the ground, the whole forest trembles, and birds hush their songs. Great is

the fall. When an unknown man falls, his failure is noted little by the world, but when a Saul, a Solomon, a Caesar, fall, the thunder of their fall reverberates through the forest glades of the ages.

We call Solomon a failure *because he finished lower down in the scale than he began.* Anyone is a failure who has retrograded, usually in proportion to the retrogression. Let me illustrate by a reference to caste. Suppose two men live in India, and suppose there are five well defined grades, or castes of society. He who starts in the first grade and closes in the second is a failure as compared with the one who starts in the fifth and closes in the fourth. Conscious of the fact that the illustration is not perfect, let it none the less suggest the idea that failure means a falling back, and success a climbing up.

Had Solomon started from a more lowly position, his failure would not have been so conspicuous. We do not refer here so much to his position as king, for he began and ended his career as Israel's earthly sovereign; but a careful study, or even a superficial glance at his life, will show that he finished on a lower moral grade than the one on which he began.

Now a youth in our day may be hampered, as was Solomon, by the position into which he is born.

There may be greater probabilities that he will pull back than that he will advance the standing of his family; but it is not by the standing of his family that we would judge him. It is rather by whether he is better morally at the close of his career than he was in former days. It is whether his character has been growing stronger and sounder, or whether it has been disintegrating.

Dr. Hillis said recently that young people who are given the advantages of social position and wealth have a moral handicap placed upon them. Let us add, though, that if handicapped by their position, the moral fiber required and the moral strength exerted to overcome that handicap can make their success even more conspicuous and more valuable than if they had not had the handicap. Let our young people, and our older ones, study carefully the things that have demoralized men and disintegrated their character, have robbed them of their truest success, and then shun those things, lest it be true of us that like Solomon we finish lower down than we began.

We call Solomon a failure *because* with his great wisdom and insight *he seems deliberately to have chosen the wrong.* He showed others the "steep and thorny road to Heaven, whilst like a puffed and reckless libertine, himself the primrose path of dalliance trod and recked not his own rede."

Moral obligation is unknown where one knows not right and wrong. Some time ago a man crawled under a great freight engine to adjust an eccentric. The throttle had not been duly fastened, and it eased out. Steam shot into the steam chest, thence to the cylinders; the pistons moved, the wheels rolled, and beneath those wheels the unfortunate hostler was caught and ground to death. The locomotive was not punished; it could not be punished. No court tried it for manslaughter. It still drags heavy trains of cars. There was no brain in its huge iron body to reason and to guide. Again, if a man-slaying lion or tiger is killed, it is generally because the keepers fear he will be dangerous again and not because he is executed for sins committed. We do not judge idiots and lunatics as we judge men of sound minds and of good reasoning faculties. The higher our wisdom the more in proportion are we held accountable for our acts.

The elementary catechism asks "Who was the wisest man?" and answers "Solomon." By the very token of his unequaled wisdom we judge him and find him a failure. He knew better. A Latin poet wrote "I see, and approve, the better things, but I actually do the worser." Solomon certainly saw, he certainly knew. His writings prove that he knew. He warned young men that the way of

the strange woman led down to the gates of the grave; that her feet took hold upon Sheol and that her guests were in the depths of hell. Yet Solomon himself brought women from strange lands and established them in his palace. He knew that to serve God was the highest duty of kings, as well as of common men; yet in his old age, to give pleasure to these foreign people he had brought into his palace, he instituted the worship of false gods; he who had erected a temple to the true God, also erected blocks of wood and stone and burned incense before them. When a king descends from the worship of the Supreme God to bow himself, or permit his subjects to bow, before idols, he is an apostate and an idolater. This declension in worship marks the progress of his failure.

We call Solomon a failure *because he misused the great power God gave him.* Power because he was a king, and power because of his wealth. He plundered and oppressed, and then used the proceeds in shameful pleasures. Visits from queens of Sheba turned his head. He came to regard pomp more than purity. He loved glory better than he loved God. He had degenerated into an Epicure,—though the word itself is an anachronism.

Solomon was one of God's stewards. The kingship was his stewardship. All material things, even our physical and intellectual gifts as we call them,

are loans. Our talents, whether of music, of art, of poetry, of eloquence, of business capacity, of beauty,—all these are loans. They are lent us by Him who possesses all things. We control them to-day, but we did not have them yesterday, and we shall not have them to-morrow. At least not in an earthly sense of possession. Whose to-day is Chopin's or Mendelssohn's, or Beethoven's, or Bach's music? Yours, mine, everybody's. The talent was loaned them. As stewards they used the loan wisely and well. Whose to-day is the art of Praxiteles, of Pheidias, of Raphael, of Millet? Is it not the common property of humanity? So is Virgil's, Dante's, and Tennyson's verse. So with Helen's beauty, and Esther's, and Cleopatra's. Beauty, genius, wealth; these are possessions that men and women are lent but for a day.

Solomon was not a wise steward. He used his loans for pleasures of the sense, like any voluptuary of an Oriental king. His life was thus doomed to prove a failure. In old age, in decay, in death, fires do not warm, gorgeous palaces do not keep out disease, and that fell sergeant Death is so strict in his arrest he cannot be bribed. When he arrested Solomon, the charge against him might truly have been "You are charged with having misused power, position, influence and means."

We call Solomon a failure *because he forgot God.* His reign begins piously, with noble prayers. Even when the temple was dedicated, Solomon still prayed, for dedicatory prayers are from his lips. But he turned, in his old age, to the false gods of his companions. How immensely true is the saying that evil companions destroy us. The Apostle wrote "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Is it not sadly true that men and women, as life advances and therefore as they inevitably have less and less of this world before them, yet love more ardently this world and its hollow pleasures, its gewgaws, tinseled joys? Is it not also sadly true, that often in that same proportion as one comes nearer the time when he must meet his God, he thinks less of the things of God, and cares less for God, His people and His church? How pathetically true is it that many a young man or woman has begun life with high ideals, with religious training, and with genuine love for better things; and yet gradually, by daily contact with base men and women, with irreligious and unhallowed lives, with pagans in Christian lands, have slowly but surely drifted off from the old moorings, and been lost in life's seas of selfishness and worldliness!

Solomon has failed and has long since passed on to be judged of that God whom he neglected and shamed. But you and I, dear friend and brother,

still live. From his career we may learn to shun those evils he harbored, and which finally overcame and destroyed him. Pray God we may grow old wisely and well. Pray God we be unharmed by all that allures and beckons us toward the flower-decked, broad and easy way which leads to the gates of death and the kingdom of everlasting despair.

So let us examine our own lives, in the light of this great failure, and let us ask: "Are we making for failure or for success? Are we slowly, with God's help, climbing higher, or are we gradually sinking lower? How about our high aspirations, our dreams of purity, of noble service? Is the gold tarnished? Is the luster dimmed? Is the fragrance and sweetness gone, or going?" If so, we must know that when our life is over, whatever men may say on our tombstone, God will write over our records in His books: *Failure.* But humble, weak, erring as we are, if we are trusting, praying, striving to be kept in humble paths of service, He will surely crown us with fadeless immortelles of success.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

VII

THE SADNESS OF A KING

"My tears have been my meat day and night."—Ps. 42:3.
"The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."—I Sam. 16:14.

THE noble spirit of King David is disquieted within him. The weakening spirit of Saul is troubled. As the world calls goodness and badness, here is a good king and here is a bad king. Both are unhappy. Listen also to the cry of Jesus: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and to the exclamation of Paul: "I am the chief of sinners," and to his pathetic cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Let us think briefly of sadness as it is manifested in human life, not that we may be made sadder, but, if possible, that we may be cured of our sadness. Let us frankly admit that sadness, as such, is not sinful; that the sum and substance of religion is by no means wholly joyousness. This is said because we hear so much about the duty of being joyful and the wickedness of being sorrowful.

We seem to live in an optimistic age. Now optimism, if by that term we mean a cheerful view of life, is essentially Christian; but optimism, if by that term we mean that everything is all right just as it is, and could not be made better, is essentially pagan. This contrast in terms is made after very careful consideration of their meaning.

A bright and hopeful outlook upon life is Christian because Christ taught us that God is our Father, and that He is taking care of His children. He said that God feeds the sparrows and the ravens and clothes the lily and sends rain on the just and the unjust. But the other kind of optimism is pagan, because it means, in its ultimate analysis, essentially this, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." We may paraphrase that sentiment as follow:— "What's the use of being worried about it? Let's have a good time while we live; that is what we live for, anyhow. We are here on a pleasure party. The world is a grand picnic ground. What, Ho! boys and girls! come! let's dance and sing and shout and play beneath the green trees, before death has his grand banquet. The night comes when it will all end, there will be nothing after that, so there is no need to worry. On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined!"

If serious-minded hearers are disposed to question the truth of such a view, let them read the

stories of orgies in the worship of Baal; of Saturnalia, of Bacchic revels, of feasts of Nero, of celebrations in honor of Apollo in the grove of Daphne at Antioch. In all these pagan celebrations is the much-lauded picnic-view of life, as its theory works out in practice.

Now let us thoroughly understand each other. If you believe that you were created and put into this world solely to "have a good time," you will not believe a single thing in my sermon. But if you believe the chief end of man is nobler—say, to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever,—you are in a position to follow and to accept what is said. I cannot believe there is any virtue in being sad, nor can I discover any sin in being happy and joyous. It all depends on why you are sad or why you are happy, and what is the motive that underlies your joy. The world no longer permits itself to be imposed upon with the idea that anything that gives pleasure is necessarily wrong, and anything that gives pain is *ipso facto* right or virtuous. To be concrete, it is no longer considered a sin, even by later-day disciples of John Wesley, for Christians to wear golden ornaments, or ladies to adorn themselves with beautiful garments and becoming bonnets. It is only when these things are carried to extremes that allow them to become the ruling motives of life that we consider them wrong or

sinful. Christians for the most part no longer draw an imaginary line in front of every temple of Thespis and say "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." It is only when the representation on the stage within this temple is immoral or degrading, or merely inane and calculated to waste valuable time, that it becomes a sin in our eyes to enter the doors of those temples.

We certainly do not consider it sinful to laugh. Grouchy as was Thomas Carlyle, we none the less find him paraphrasing Shakespeare by saying: "The man who cannot laugh is not only fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils, but his whole life is already a treason and a stratagem." We modern Christians will not permit some mournful friar, who digs his own grave in the solemn hour of midnight, singing doleful songs the while, to foist upon us the false doctrine that God is pleased when we are sorrowful. Nor will the flagellating brothers, with bare, bleeding shoulders, whipping themselves from pillar to post, ever again make us believe that we honor God by dishonoring this frame which the Bible has called His temple. Nevertheless, friends, there is essentially a great truth underlying this world of error, and that truth may be summed up in this statement: The life of man, the soul of man, the immortal destiny of man, are all too vast, too complicated, too Godlike, to be made absolutely happy

by the things that can be seen and handled and heard and tasted in this present world. "Man's unhappiness, as I construe, comes of his greatness. It is because there is an infinite in him which with all his cunning he cannot quite bury under the finite."

But since man's unhappiness cannot be said, in every instance, to arise from his greatness, let us look briefly at some of the causes of our woes, real or imaginary, "and all we mourn for."

Sometimes our unhappiness is *from purely material causes.* Melancholia is a disease. No demonstration is needed since your own experience has proved to you that, all other things being equal, life looks fairer when the sun shines than it does when the clouds lower. You and I are less prone to propound to ourselves, and to others, the dialectical donkey's question "Is life worth living?" when all the functions of our body work well, when digestion is perfect, and altogether we are free from the hamperings of headache, the ravages of rheumatism, or the terrors of toothache. The cure for materialistic melancholy is likewise materialistic. Here at least is true the famous dictum, "*Similia similibus curantur.*" If the disease is physical, certainly the remedy, even if a mental one, must affect the physical nature. The remedy required for a great deal of melancholy is a little more fresh air,

a little more exercise, a little more Fletcherizing, a little less highly seasoned food.

Sometimes our unhappiness is *from a sense of uselessness, a feeling of failure.* One may have set for himself the accomplishment of a certain end in life, and failing of that accomplishment he may be thrown into a heavier or lighter state of sadness by feeling that he has failed. There would be manifold manifestations of this if we could read the heart-lives of many of our more serious-minded friends all about us in this present day. The trouble seems to be that we have set some impossible or some incorrect standard and have been unable to measure up to it, or else to keep up to it. I know a clergyman who occasionally preaches very able, very helpful sermons; but on the principle that the clock cannot strike twelve every time, this clergyman does not preach his best sermons every Sunday. If you meet him on Monday after he has delivered one of the sermons which he considers a failure, you will feel when you have got within fifty feet of him that you are approaching a combination of an ice and an indigo factory. You find him in that state of mind spoken of by the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, who moans "I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. . . . I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What

doeth it? . . . Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun. *Vanitas vanitatum; omnia est vanitas.*"

One may state the cure of this species of sadness by accurately stating the disease itself. It is in fact neither more nor less than that the man has considered himself set to do something which no man is set to do. He has, in other words, taken himself a little too seriously.

The whole world, its happiness and its destiny, does not depend on this one sermon that I preach to-day, or on all the sermons that are preached in all the world. What is said of sermons is true of other lines of endeavor. You have not jarred the good old world out of her track, or changed her axis, or delayed her in her course, by the few mistakes you have made this past week; and moreover, if you have labored conscientiously you have accomplished more than you think. Pippa, in Browning's poem, did not know her song snatched a soul out of baleful sin.

Sometimes our unhappiness is *from real loss or sorrow*, brought about by events external to our own minds and hearts, absolutely beyond our control. Sickness, absence, or death of loved ones may be classed under this head. Shall I be blamed if, when my friend has gone from me, I am unable to show the world as smiling a face as I showed when that

face was reflecting the sunlit life of him who walked at my side? If Lear's two daughters turned their poor, white-haired father out into the pitiless storm of the night, is he altogether blameworthy that he cries to his one faithful friend and attendant, "O, fool, I shall go mad"? If Hamlet's uncle has murdered Hamlet's father, and wedded Hamlet's mother, and a ghost has come from the grave to tell him this, can one say that Hamlet should cast it all off and smile and jest; that he should snap his fingers in the world's face and say: "Well, the old man's dead, and gone. True, he was murdered, but what of it? True, my mother has married the murderer; but what of that? True, this murderer has popped in between the election and my hopes; but what of that? I will laugh. I will sing. I will shout for joy. The world's a grand picnic anyway, and I am in for my part of the morris dance. I will be there when they pass around the sandwiches and pickles; and the brown ale I will quaff; for what should a man do but be merry? For look you how blithe my mother is, and my father dead within these two hours!"

For this species of sadness, which is largely the result of external conditions, over which the mind may in time come to have control, but which it has not yet conquered, one cannot so easily state a cure. Of course it is even true that there are con-

ditions which, as the world now goes, seem to be irremediable, at least for this life. Such perhaps were in the mind of the poet, Edwin Markham, when he spoke of "immedicable woes." What men have been pleased to call "the consolations of religion" are the only consolations that can be given after all. Lear's youngest daughter may return from France and espouse the old king's cause, but that does not bring sanity back to his mind. Hamlet's poisoned sword may find the heart of blood-stained Claudius, but that does not re-seat the elder Hamlet on the throne of Denmark. That woe, the woe of his murder, is indeed "immedicable." Yet when I go to your home after a great sorrow has come into that home, I find, as every bishop of souls finds, that the only thing which affords you any surcease for your sorrow, is the balm of Gilead, which by a strange mingling of truth and metaphor, flows for you and me. In our dark hours we know our Lord sympathizes with us: He has been in Gethsemane before us. It comforts us to be told that our sorrows are known to Him who was acquainted with grief.

Sometimes our unhappiness is *from the infinite nature of our souls.* Nothing absolutely satisfies us because we are essentially unsatisfiable. The mere animal takes his fill of material comforts and seems to rest in perfect satisfaction, but with man

it is different. Give him a marble palace in which to dwell. Clothe him in purple and fine linen. Load his banquet board with richest viands. He is yet unsatisfied. Surround him with friends, store his mind with the learning of the ages, and his restless spirit drives him on. Crowd his life with worldly honors and successes, and all worldly joys, still into his eyes there comes at times that far-away yearning look as of a homesick pilgrim in a foreign land. In proportion to the delicacy, refinement, and beauty of their spirits men are so unsatisfied and unsatisfiable, that when we look into their eyes we know what he meant who said that we are strangers and pilgrims in this land as all our fathers before us were. They and we realize that they can tarry but for a night. I love to think of the great spirit of Lincoln, around whose very laughter there glitters a tear; whose smile is overspread with a nameless sadness, as some morning in May, when sunshine and shower are strangely blended. Long ago St. Augustine felt this sorrow, this sadness, this melancholy of the orphan spirit of man, and long ago St. Augustine correctly stated the meaning: "O God," he says in his confessions, "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless within us until they rest in Thee." The singer of Israel a long while before Augustine had said, "Thou hast made man a little lower than God," and because he is made thus in-

finite, finite things will never quite satisfy. And as the old Bishop of Hippo has suggested, the cure for this species of sadness is to rest in God.

O heart of man, restless like the surging sea which cannot be still; O heart of man, hungry like the hungry sea which cannot be satisfied; there is one stillness and one satisfaction for thee, and only one. It is that peace and that satisfaction which come only when thou hast quaffed the divine elixir, breathed the ambrosial air, and feasted upon the heavenly fruits of thy Father's country, and thine own.

VIII

LEST I TOO BE A CASTAWAY

"Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—I Cor. 9:27.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—I Cor. 10:12.

IN the early hours of the battle of Waterloo, Wellington feigned a retreat. Napoleon was accustomed to such feints, and at first was troubled; but when he saw the van of the English army disappear, he rose in his stirrups and the lightning of victory flashed from his eyes. He swept his glass over all points of the battlefield. He examined the slopes, noted the declivities, scrutinized the clumps of trees, and seemed to be counting each bush. Then he dropped his glass, and fell to thinking. Wellington had drawn back. It was necessary, Napoleon thought, to do only one thing: to hurl his cuirassiers upon the English infantry, and crush them. The retreat of the English would become a disorderly rout. He called a messenger, and sent him full speed to Paris to announce that the battle was won. It is hardly necessary to add that it had not even well begun, and that the intrepid English soldiers, under their great and fearless

leader, had not yet begun to fight. Six hours later a wretched, downcast, defeated, humiliated Napoleon was creeping, under cover of the night, towards Paris. All that was left of his proud army were shattered and scattered groups, flying in disorderly retreat in every direction.

This famous story illustrates a great principle, and that principle as applied to Christian experience is summed up in the words of the old hymn:

> "Ne'er think the victory won,
> Nor lay thine armor down;
> Thine arduous work will not be done,
> Till thou obtain thy crown."

To-day there is an all but universal craze for optimism. There is an all but universal denunciation of anything that may be construed as pessimism. We are ready to follow almost any prophet who will tell us that he can lead us into success. Let him paint the future in rosy colors, let him cry from the housetops his greatness and his fitness to save, and thousands of his fellow-beings will trust to him. In the meantime saner prophets may see clearly some impending doom, and may announce that doom: they will be greeted with jeers, be insulted, be denounced, with that ultimate word in the modern vocabulary of vituperation, namely Pessimist. The pessimist is looked upon as the lowest of all classes of thinkers. Almost universally, Cas-

sandra prophecies are derided. Almost universally, those who foretell the destruction of Jerusalem are met with the angry cry, "Away with this man! Crucify him!"

Notwithstanding this, and even at the risk of being called more or less pessimistic, the pulpit of our day must sound warnings. It must blow the trumpets; must assemble the people; must warn the army when the enemies are descried upon the horizon; or are even storming at the gates. For one to cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, is to place the burden of the responsibility of the people's destruction upon his own shoulders. The ancient prophets warned of impending dangers; the apostles were not silent; Christ Himself thundered the doom of the city of David.

There is such a thing as being lulled to sleep with a sense of security when there is no security. Overpowering poppy odors are said to make drowsy the poor wretch who throws himself upon the ground to rest near where the flowers grow; and there, dreaming of sunlit glades and angel voices and sweet odors as of paradise, his life is sapped away.

St. Paul recognized this danger. He feared that a feeling of security might lull him into a spiritual sleep in which he would be senseless to the dangers about him, and he who had been a preacher of the gospel of salvation, might himself become a

castaway. Our Lord recognized it when, in His parable of the Sower, He said that the seed which fell upon stony ground was symbolic of those shallow hearts who receive the Word, but in the hour of temptation fall away.

We too, are to remember this danger. It should not make us morbid, or gloomy, or pessimistic, but it should put us upon our guard; it should urge us to struggle against those disintegrating, demoralizing, destroying forces which are throttling the world to-day. The battle is not won; the armor must not be laid down until God Himself calls us into His presence and rewards us with the crown of victory.

Now this danger of lapsing, or falling, or becoming a castaway, may be personal and individual. "Lest I myself should be a castaway," said St. Paul. When Jesus told His followers that they need not expect Him to feed them loaves and fishes, but that if they followed Him it must be for spiritual reasons, many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Those deserters had known the companionship of Jesus. Perhaps as disciples, they had sat at His feet, had listened to the sublime words that flowed from His lips. And yet when a hard saying was propounded to them, they fell away.

The personal element must never be forgotten in

these dangerous times. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does not guarantee that the saints shall be held in their position willy-nilly, if they do not themselves try to persevere. The very word perseverance means that they are to go through hardships, and are to continue to struggle in order that they may succeed. They are to make their calling and election sure. Some years ago, in one of our Southern cities, an epidemic of smallpox was raging. One of the chief physicians of the town came and went amongst the patients. At first he took great care and precaution, but little by little he grew negligent, scornful of the dread disease, considering himself its master. But one day he was compelled to diagnose for himself that the disease had laid hold upon him. He had not obeyed those laws of health and had not taken those precautionary measures which he counseled others to obey and to take. He became in that sense a castaway. We must never grow negligent. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Remember the seed that fell on stony ground. When the hour of temptation comes, shallow-rooted Christians are likely to wither. God forbid that anyone in this Divine presence to-day, that any member of this church or congregation, should ever lapse from his high estate. God grant that each one shall fight on until death shall bring him his great victory.

Churches may fall away. Whole congregations, whole denominations may disintegrate. St. John, in his vision on the Isle of Patmos, received from the risen Christ messages to the seven churches which were in Asia, and he was told to say unto the angel of the church at Ephesus:

> "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Think of it! One of the first of the Christian churches, a church that had heard the preaching of John who had lain on the bosom of the Lord and the eloquence of Paul whose soul had been set afire with flames from heaven—this church had left its first love! It was cautioned to remember from whence it had fallen and repent, and to do its first work. There stood the church, like one of the branches of the golden candlestick of God, throwing its light throughout the world, but because of its apostasy, unless it repented its candlestick would be removed; and removed it was. There is to-day no trace of the church that was in Ephesus in the days of the apostles.

Melancholy is the record of abandoned churches. What can be more pathetic than such a sight! Hubert C. Herring, in addressing the United Rep-

resentatives of the Mission Boards of several great churches, said:

"My thoughts wing themselves away to a little white church on the hillside in southern Wisconsin. It is closed and locked. For years no preacher has stood in its pulpit, no people have sat in its pews; but I know of a time when a goodly company of men and women, boys and girls heard there the word of God's grace."

Passing along the thoroughfares of almost any great American city there may be seen the placard of the real estate dealer on the walls or doors of some deserted church: "For Sale." Goldsmith has sung the requiem of the Deserted Village. The world is full of ruined cities. Tyre, Nineveh and Babylon have literally fulfilled the ancient prophecies that the wild beasts of the desert should make their lairs underneath their palaces, and that the owl and cormorant and all doleful creatures should hoot in their deserted streets, and the fishermen should spread their nets to dry upon blocks of stone that were once altars in the temples of the gods. A mournful thing indeed is the deserted farm or abandoned city, but more pathetic still is the abandoned church. Not always a sign of wickedness or infidelity, or even of carelessness on the part of the people of the church, the deserted sanctuary is still a warning that if any church does fall away from its first love, its candlestick will be removed, because its light has already gone out.

What country was it that first heard the story of the cross? Beginning at Jerusalem and Judea and going through Samaria, and then unto the uttermost parts of the world, the gospel was preached in Palestine, in Asia, then in Greece, then in Rome, then in Spain, in Gaul, and in Britain. For centuries there had been Christianity in Syria and Palestine when our own Germanic or British ancestors first heard the story of the cross; and yet to-day the Christian church, save as an exotic, is not found in Palestine or in Syria. The country that first had the gospel has lapsed into Mohammedanism or worse; and there is no very great assurance that full light will ever return to those parts of the world from whence the golden candlestick was taken away.

Church organizations may dwindle and die, the whole communion may pass away. There is much talk to-day of the passing of the church. Someone, perhaps Chesterton, has daringly paraphrased Wagner, and instead of singing of "The Twilight of the Gods" speaks of "The Night of Christianity." There is much that is untrue, but there is some element of truth in these contentions of many as to the passing of the church. This certainly is true: that if the church does not live up to the high ideals set by Christ Himself, its candlestick will be removed. God will substitute some other agency to

perform His work in the world. He does not use a dead agency, or one that is out of date. "Therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness."

Nations may become castaways. Where now are the great empires of old, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Greece, Carthage and Rome? Their hollow voices, like the dismal moanings of disembodied empire-spirits, echo out of the dead past: "We were, but we are not"; their very dust is not.

Great Christian powers, as well as pagan, may become castaways, and fall from their high estates. The so-called Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages, the Spain of Charles V, the Portugal of other days—where are those countries? Dismembered, or disrobed, or chained, or altered beyond recognition.

Nations that have once been Christian nations may fall away from Christ. Read the story of France, and how the church in France, grown rich and powerful, forgot its main task, its essential duty, and fell away from its first love. What took place in France, has, in some measure, also taken place in Italy, in Portugal, in Spain, in Germany, in Austria and even in England: yea, and in America!

America has her obligations. How will she meet

these obligations? Lucifer, the archangel Lucifer, son of the morning, fell. Humanly speaking, the outlook is none too bright in Christian countries. To-day, not to speak of the war, abroad and at home, and everywhere, there are strikes, crime and degradation. There is unseemly wrangling in high places; there are scrambles for office, for power, for wealth; and we Americans seem to be divided between those who are degenerating their souls with luxuries, or burning them out with hot desires for luxuries which we cannot obtain. Again humanly speaking we would say that these things seem to threaten the integrity of the American republic as a Christian nation. Byron's "Greek Bard" attributed the lost greatness of his country to the bacchanalian revels, the Samian wine and the Pyrrhic dance. Let luxury-loving America remember also the "Cotter's Saturday Night," in which Burns draws a picture of the homely, humble life of his people, and prays that Scotia's hardy sons of rustic toil may be blest with health and peace and sweet content; and that heaven may keep their simple lives free from the weak and vile contagion of luxury. This nation was founded by Christians, for Christians, and upon Christian principles. Now that it has grown great and rich, will it forget its first love? Must some future bard be compelled to sing, paraphrasing Isaiah, "How art thou fallen,

O America, thou that didst inspire and enlighten the world?" Shall barbaric fishermen a thousand years hence dry their nets on those docks where to-day the ocean leviathans unload their burdens? Shall strange doleful creatures haunt the ruined streets of New York, Philadelphia and Chicago? Shall desert winds sing requiems over the grave of American greatness? Stranger things have happened—as strange things may happen again.

There is but one salvation for the individual, for the church, for the state, and that salvation is in simple, vital religion, in Christ's power to save. Without this we are all in a mad dance of death, but with this we are all on the high road to life. Let individuals, let churches, let states, if they have gone astray, repent and turn to God, and obey Him, for He will have mercy upon them—unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

"And when he came to himself, he said . . . I will arise and go to my father."

IX

THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE

"Noah opened the window of the ark . . .
"He sent forth a raven . . .
"He sent forth a dove . . ."—GEN. 8:6, 7, 8.

THE ancient story of the flood never grows old. It is more than mere history. It is so beautifully symbolic that it brings new messages to every generation. At once parabolic and prophetic, we of to-day may find it illustrative of great truths which are as essential to our happiness and well-being as they were to men of long ago; truths that, though often told, are "new every morning and fresh every evening."

To-day let us find a message for our own guidance, comfort, and edification from this majestic epic of a time long gone. Let us seek to grow wiser and better as we think of the ark of God's protecting love for us during the voyage of life; as we are swirled hither and yon by the eddies and currents of the dangerous floods. And while we grieve that there is so much of the raven nature, and so little of the dove spirit, in us; let us rejoice that our Noah, our "Rest," our Lord, puts forth

His hand to receive and protect the wounded, straying, fluttering purity and faith there is in us all.

In our story, when the raven is sent forth, it does not return. The world in which it finds itself is a raven world, a world suited to a raven's nature and needs. Carrion bodies of beast and bird and man furnished it not only a resting place for its feet, but also food such as it craved.

From times of old this ill-omened bird has been associated with death and the dead. In speaking of the murder of her King, Lady Macbeth says:

> "The raven himself is hoarse,
> That croaks the fateful entrance of Duncan
> Under my battlements."

In Hamlet, as the murder in the little drama within the great drama is about to be committed, the excited prince bursts forth:

> "The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."

Poe writes a poem in which this idea of the raven is presented. His raven is the sinister and ill-omened power which sits in the heart it has mastered, and croaks to it, "Nevermore."

So in this Biblical narrative the raven represents the carnal, the worse part of man.

We have said Noah's raven did not return because it found food for itself; found a world fitted

to its needs. The raven here is a striking contrast, a foil, in fact, to the dove. When Noah lets loose the gentler bird, she flies to and fro and finds no rest for the sole of her foot, and no food suited to her purer desires; hence she returns to the ark. The reason for her return is precisely the same as the raven's reason for remaining outside the ark. It is a world unfitted for a dove—this world of fetid waters, of abominable odors, of floating dead bodies. There is no green tree, not even a rock upon which she may rest. She returns to the ark because in all that vast wilderness of water she finds no congenial spot, no place where her dove-needs are met.

Have we not here a picture of man's faring forth from the shelter of God's home, into a world fitted more for raven-needs than for dove-needs? There are few but have had experience enough to enable them to testify to the truth of this. The world can satisfy our animal cravings only. No matter how truly replete with all that the raven desires, the dove nature of man is not and cannot be filled therewith. We may particularize as follows: Here is a young man who has had some spiritual experience and some nurture and growth in grace. Going out of the shelter of the home, perhaps from one section of the city to another, or from a small city to a large one, he thereby leaves the protecting

care of his earlier days. He endeavors to supply all the needs of his nature with those things that the raven world furnishes. For instance he may be successful in his business. He may purchase for himself comfortable, even elegant, clothing; he may lodge himself in a commodious dwelling place and may feast on finest viands. He may add such luxuries as automobiles and yachts. He may go further, carrying the religion of sense to its logical, or illogical, conclusion: he may plunge into all the excesses of the world, adopt for his motto the pagan sentiment "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." But his highest nature will not be satisfied. The world can never give the bliss for which he sighs. As truly as the prodigal in the parable found it impossible to satisfy his hunger with the husks that the swine did eat, so truly is our young man unable to fill his heart and soul with the things that come solely through the senses. The dove-need in him flies to and fro and finds no place for the sole of its foot. Grateful should he be to Almighty God for this weariness of wings which drives him back to the ark. Grateful should he be that the raven's world furnishes no food that satisfies, and no resting place for the spirit. It was St. Augustine who said "Thou, O God, hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless within us until it rests in Thee." And David sang "As the

hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

Let us now change our underlying metaphor as we notice the action of the dove when Noah sends her forth a second time. Now she does find a place where she could rest. But she returns to the ark bringing an olive branch, green and fresh. The olive leaf tells that the waters have so far subsided that the hills are dry, for olives do not grow on the tops of the mountains. It tells too that the grass is tender on the hillside, that the trees are shaking off the mud and rotted foliage and are clothing themselves in new garments of living green. True, there is still water enough to float the ark, but perhaps some uplands are ready to feed the flocks. It is no longer wholly a raven's world. The dove might have remained on some sunny mountain slope. She may already have found some spot where she longed to bring her mate and build her nest, where, when her golden couplet should be disclosed, she might croon to them her lullaby. And yet she returns. Why? Is it not that she might show her gratitude to Noah who had protected her in those days when the flood covered the face of the world? In the first instance she returned because she had no place to put her feet. In the second instance she returned to show her gratitude to her benefactor.

And we owe a debt of gratitude to our Noah, Christ, that Pilot of our ark. How prone we are to overlook even so small a thing as gratitude! Last Sabbath morning many people in this Christian city did not so much as consider the thought of going to God's house to show their gratitude for His protection of them. A short time ago King George returned to England in safety after his visit to the army in France; special services of gratitude to God for His protecting care were held in the Abbey and in St. Paul's Cathedral, as well as in many other churches and chapels throughout the British realm. Yet it does not occur to tens of thousands of people in Britain and in America that the same protection, the same Providential care, is over each and every individual during each and every moment of his life. Now some were kept from the sanctuary by sickness, others by legitimate domestic duties; but many others failed to come to the house of God to show their gratitude, because they felt no gratitude. Someone says "Is it only in the house of God that this attribute of gratitude can be paid?" Of course not, and yet it is true that when one forgets God's house for any other than a Providential reason, he speedily loses the feeling of gratitude, and there is not even a prayer from the most secret place of his heart, no sending up of fervent, devout

hymns of praise to the Saviour. May we not learn a lesson then from the timid and shrinking dove, who did not remain away to build her nest but returned with the olive leaf that she might show to Noah her gratitude for his care.

When the dove is sent forth the third and last time she does not return. Our underlying metaphor changes again. This time it is not upon some trial trip that the dove is sent. She did not return for she found the waters gone and everything to her heart's desire. We are thinking now of the final journey of the soul. Quitting the ark which floats upon dark earth-bound seas, the soul wings her flight to that ark upon the shining waters of the River of Life. When Noah's timid dove returned to him, he put out his hand and took her into the ark, unto himself. Now at the end of this flight of the soul, we hope for, we believe we shall experience, the same boon. God, the great Father of the human soul, sees the tired spirit winging its flight to Him: He reaches out His strong hands, and the spirit drops into His fatherly embrace. The strong arms eternal close about it, and the world-weary spirit, brought into the ark of heaven, is at rest.

Pray God we may, through faith in Jesus and after our earthly life has shown our gratitude to Him, be received into that world which knows no

floods of sorrow, no soul-starving watery wastes of deadly despair; but which knows only morning songs and sweet light, and our Father's deathless love.

X

SACRIFICES WHICH COST NOTHING

"And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord, my God, of that which doth cost me nothing."—II Sam. 24: 14.

THE circumstances leading to this avowal are both interesting in themselves and necessary to an understanding of what follows. The David who appears in this passage has traveled far from the David who, amid the sheepcotes of Bethlehem, was anointed the future king of Israel. More than forty-five years have passed. The young boy of Jesse's household has met on the field of battle the great champion, Goliath. He has been called into the presence of King Saul. He has succeeded Saul upon the throne. He has experienced the exultation and the depression which come into the life of every public man. He has warred and been beaten; he has warred and been successful. And now, in his old age, the kingdom seems serene about him. His battles seem to have been all fought and won; his government seems firmly established; his crown and his scepter may certainly and surely be handed down to his son Solomon.

During the time that stress and trial and tumult were over and about him, we do not read that the king was tempted by the subtle pride and the no less subtle self-appraisement which we find in the present narrative. It was the time of peace which tried his soul. War, rebellion, suffering, sorrow, these things may have tried his arms, his sword, his brain, even his faith—in a way—but it is the time of peace and of plenty, of quietness and serenity, which tries his soul.

As a parallel to the pride which mounts through his swelling heart to his brain, we may turn to the passage of Daniel where Nebuchadnezzar is represented as glorying over the great and beautiful city of Babylon which he had built.

His is a splendid, kingly figure as he stalks on the walls of his palace and proudly says, "See this great Babylon which I have built." The wrath of God was stirred against Nebuchadnezzar and, even according to the prophecy uttered by Daniel, he came upon his knees and hands for seven years and went through the most humiliating experiences that a king might know. This is not the sequel to the story of David's pride, but it illustrates the attitude of his spirit when he looked abroad over the rich lands and fertile fields of his kingdom. From Dan to Beersheba, and from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same it was a

great and prosperous land. On a thousand hills cattle grazed and sheep browsed; in a thousand valleys and on a thousand meadows were there visible and tangible evidences of the wealth of his people. And, moreover, there was a feeling of parental pride that he could hand down to his son such a magnificent kingdom and such a royal throne. Here is where we get to the mainspring of his motives. Here we understand the real secret of the sinfulness of his action. He ordered a census to be taken; not a census of the entire population, men, women and children, but a census of those already prepared for war and those of military age. It is not difficult to understand the meaning of all this. When kings and governors begin to count their soldiers and look with eyes of swelling pride upon their battalions it can mean only one thing, namely, that such governors are trusting in the might and power of the sword. Among heathen races we should not be surprised, but in a man of David's spiritual and religious heritage, one who had tasted and seen the great things of God, we are amazed to find that he, too, falls into the error of trusting in the sword. "Some," said he, in one of his songs, "trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." Pity this splendid verbal faith should not be now the motive of his life's action!

When David forgot that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," he also had a direct commandment which should have warned him against falling into this sin of pride and numbering the people. In the Thirtieth Chapter of Exodus, verses 11-16, Jehovah had given command to His people that if they should take the sum of the children of Israel according to their number, then should they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord . . . that there be no plague among them." It had been foreseen by the Divine Lawgiver that, if Israel was to fulfill her destiny among the nations, she must fulfill that destiny in God's Might and Power, she must trust in Him and not in her own strength. Wherefore the command making it obligatory, if the census is to be taken, to pay a ransom for each soul lest a plague be sent upon Israel. David knew this, and if his eyes had not been dazzled by the brilliancy of earthly greatness he would certainly have known before, as well as afterwards, the sinfulness of numbering Israel in this proud and boastful way.

One is moved to admire the distinguished captain of the king's hosts, Joab, who rebuked his lord, the king, in so far as he was able under the manners and customs of an absolute monarchy, for we read that Joab said, "Now the Lord thy God

add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?" The penetrating Joab saw that the king delighted in that sort of thing, and in so far as it was possible he endeavored to bring the king to an understanding of the sinfulness of such an action. Notwithstanding his rebuke, the king's word prevailed and Joab and the other captains of the host went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

Nine months and twenty days went they throughout the land. It was a great task, but it was finally accomplished and the report was made to the still proud king that there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword, and that the men of Judah were five hundred thousand. After the numbers were reported to him, the record is that "David's heart smote him . . . and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, O Lord, I beseech thee, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."

It may strike us in these modern days as quite singular that there should be any sinfulness attached to the numbering of the hosts of Israel. These reasons are at least twofold:

First, that such numbering was divinely forbid-

den in the law delivered through Moses, except under given conditions, and with circumstances which in this case were not complied with.

And, second, the pride of heart, the self-reliance, the reliance upon human might and power, rather than upon the might and power of the Spirit of God.

In passing, we may very well inquire, I think, whether such a thing has any bearing upon conditions and circumstances in the modern church of God. Let us never forget that, spiritually, we are the Israel of God, and that Jesus Himself affirmed that not one jot or one tittle of the ancient law should pass away till all should be fulfilled. I take it therefore that it is at least suggestive to us, this sin of numbering Israel, of certain weak places, if not actually of certain sins, in the modern church. Thus, take my own church: One seldom sits through a session of presbytery, synod, or assembly, that his ears are not constantly filled with that resounding phrase, so dear apparently to our clergy and laity, "The *Great* Presbyterian Church." At a recent meeting of presbytery during one hour there were more than one-half-dozen times when this exact phrase was used. Not only do we glory in what we call "The Great Presbyterian Church," but I wonder if we have not gone a little too far in our numberings and countings of the heads in Israel. Each

year every church in the entire communion is requested, nay, required, to report to the General Assembly the exact number of communicants served on its rolls; the number received on confession of faith; the number accepted from other folds. We make detailed and minute reports concerning our gifts to the Boards and charitable institutions of the church and the community. We have gone further than this. We have a pagan way of estimating the strength of the church by the numbers on its rolls. In even a more pagan way we scan carefully the financial columns opposite to the names of the churches and we reckon that a great and good church which gives large sums to the various Boards, and of course, therefore, we reckon that to be a weak church which gives small sums. We have been logical and have gone still further. We have proceeded to measure the spiritual impact not only of the church but of the minister of that church upon his community and his day and generation by this fictitious, this ungodly standard of figures, of numbers on church rolls, of dollars contributed to the various agencies, and that man is considered a great man among the captains of the hosts of modern Israel, whose people are very numerous, or very wealthy, and very generous. One would stultify himself to under-rate the work necessary in order that a congregation may

be built up in numbers, and even more so, would he stultify himself to under-rate the need of liberality in our congregations. All glory and praise to those strong churches who can and do give largely of their means and substance, but it is certainly worth the while of every one of our churches to remember the sin committed by David in numbering the people of Israel.

When his heart within him had oriented itself in some measure at least and David perceived the sinfulness of his action, God sent His prophet, Gad, to David. It was a startling message which Gad spoke to the king: "Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. . . . Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me."

Now the real David, the true David, the David who was a man after God's own heart, the David who, when his sin was pointed out to him, always repented, showed his spiritual greatness in his ultimate reliance upon God in his reply. David said unto Gad, "I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." Having

thus wisely refused to choose what punishment should be meted out to him David continues to repent of this sinfulness of his heart, and when the Spirit of God stretches out the hand of pestilence, and when the wails of sorrow and distress and the groans of the sick and the dying are arising from every part of his kingdom David cries out in despair, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house."

Once more comes Gad, the seer, and advises David that he must rear an altar and make his sacrifice of burnt offering unto the Lord ere the sin is forgiven and the affliction of pestilence be entirely removed from the land. Then it is that the king goes unto Araunah, owner of the threshing floor, where Gad has said the altar shall be built. In a princely way, befitting one king speaking to another, Araunah offers his threshing floor unto his king, free of all cost. Then comes from David's lips that noble expression which forms the words of our text to-day, that expression which was true not only for David, but for every other one who, in the course of human history, would truly repent of sinful ways; yea, which is true to this very moment and which may be called "the worthlessness of cheap repentance." "I will not offer unto the Lord,

my God," said David, "sacrifices which cost me nothing." We are not concerned with the amount paid for the threshing floor. We are concerned only with the fact that it was bought and paid for with a price. Thereon was erected the altar and on the altar were laid the burnt offerings, and upon this occasion, as upon others, the aged king might have cried out, in the words of his own Psalm, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," and when he had paid the price of money for the land, and of a broken and a contrite heart for the altar, he may have completed his song with those familiar words, "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering."

Again let us see what is the bearing of this action, prayer, and sacrifice on David's part in the life of our modern Israel or even of the modern world in general. It may be laid down as a principle that the world has nothing to give to him who has not some price to pay. We are so often eager to get something for nothing; we are allured by advertisements which paint an approximation to this something for nothing. This, that, the other, is marked as being below cost, and for sale at half-price, or less. So common is this in our current life that we have not stopped to analyze the underlying fallacy of the

whole thing. And I greatly fear that this insidious and destructive heresy is laying its withering blight upon us in more ways than that which is first suggested by the text. For a moment or two, and purely for a convenient mode of speech, let us adopt pagan terminology, and let us speak of success as a god. It is true that the god Success requires that the price be paid for offerings made unto him; likewise the god Learning, or the god Mammon even. In fact, it makes no difference what be the false deity man has decided to build his altar before, that deity refuses absolutely to accept an offering which has cost nothing; no success is attained until the price has been paid.

Young man, young woman, the world is before you. It has many rich prizes, as worldly things go. There is honor, there is trust, there are houses and lands and titles and dignities. You may take your choice and if you will pay the price, barring all accidents and early death, you may have what you pay for; but without the price you cannot have it. You may have grasped the appearance thereof to find that it is a shadow, a mirage, nothing tangible, nothing real. I love the well-worn story of young Ptolemy and his preceptor. The high-spirited young prince remonstrated with Euclid because it was necessary for him to study and work so hard in order for him to acquire the rudiments of

mathematics. You remember Euclid's reply,— "There is no royal road to Geometry." There is, my friend, no royal road to Anywhere. Royalty, itself, as the world calls royalty, pays the same price for its true possessions that the meanest butcher's son in all the realm must pay. In college I knew two brothers. I cannot say they were of equal talents, for that I do not know, but they were of equal parentage, of course, and of equal opportunity, and so far as external things were concerned of equal incentive. One led his classes and graduated with the highest honors and is to-day a very successful man. The other failed in his studies because he did not work, finally dropped out of college before graduation, and I do not know what has become of him.

Now the lesson for us is that there is no attainment of spiritual success unless one pays the price. We are familiar with the old song,

> "Jesus paid it all,
> All to Him I owe,"

and as a theological proposition I should not care to dispute that the debt we owed for our sins was paid on the cross once and for all, for you and for me. I believe that. But there is something else I must also believe. Apostle Paul speaks of entering into "the fellowship of his sufferings," and in another

place, he says that we are "partakers of the sufferings," "for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

This heresy that the sacrifice which costs nothing may be just as acceptable as one which costs our all has got hold of the popular heart, so that to-day religion contains little or no elements of renunciation. Men unite with the church, they make a formal profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, they undertake the solemn obligation to "live a godly, righteous, and sober life," and too often they go out from the church doors unchanged as to motives, purposes, or actions in life.

We even resent any imputation that our religion should cost anything. To begin with the lowest of cost, how few are willing, actually, to pay their part towards the financial obligations of a modern church? How can they expect that their sacrifices, so called, will amount to anything when they do not cost anything? And then how often it is true men consider that when they have paid a few dollars they have paid all that is required of them! That there should be any sacrifice of ease on their part in so small a thing, for instance, as attending the second service on the Sabbath or the mid-week prayer meeting is not to be thought of—far less, of subjecting themselves to the rigors of the stormy winter or the heat of the summer day. Could such

easy-going Christians once enter into the real sufferings of Jesus, the heart-throbbings and the blood sweatings of Gethsemane, the indignity and shame and pain of Pilate's Judgment Hall, the torture and horror and moaning of the cross, the vast heart-breaking sigh, as He yielded up the ghost, it seems to me that it would shame the one who could not risk a few drops of rain, a few flakes of snow, or even a few degrees of torrid heat at least one day in the week to render thanksgivings to God and make the sacrifice of a humble and contrite heart unto Him.

I have often seen professing Christians who, having embarked upon the Christian life as upon some holiday excursion, believing, apparently, that the church is a Pullman Palace Car in which they are to be carried without jerk or jolt or inconvenience beyond the terminal station of Death, and into the City Eternal, have bitterly resented some sudden sorrow that has swept over their souls. Loss of property, malignings of enemies, the defection of a brother or friend, calamity, disappointment, death,—one or several of these have come to shock their placid lives, and they have cried out in anguish and resentment, because they have been asked to pay this price for the sacrifice which they have laid upon the altar.

One final word: It would not be giving this wonderful text a fair treatment if we did not turn

the phraseology about and have it refer not to the price which man pays in the sacrifices he gives to God, but rather have it refer to the price which God paid in the sacrifice which He made for the sins of the world.

That sacrifice on Calvary! Think you it cost nothing? It is an old but still a beautiful phrase that God emptied heaven of its richest treasures in order that He might pay that wonderful sacrifice. We do not know all there is in this unplumbed, unmeasured universe, in the outlying, far-distant quarters of the Cosmos, beyond the swing and sweep of our farthest satellite. Out where other suns burn in those mighty deeps, there may be worlds each one of which is some perfect jewel, a beryl, a chrysolite, a pearl. Without any cost the Eternal God could turn a thousand worlds of gold and precious gems into a burning, storm-swept surface of some huge, superheated sun, as a sacrifice, but it would have cost Him nothing. But when the Only-Begotten Son of the Father denuded Himself of His Eternal Glory for a time, to be born of a woman in the lowly ranks of this world, to suffer heat and thirst and cold and hunger, to be misunderstood and to be scoffed at, to be jeered, to be falsely condemned, to be crucified, it was indeed a price which He paid far beyond all the wealth of all the worlds that sweep through this infinity.

Should not all this make us humble to-day in the presence of God, and should it not impel us to make the confession of our lips and hearts the thought spoken long ago by David, king of Israel, "I will not offer unto the Lord, my God, a sacrifice which costs me nothing"?

XI

THE LAME PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF SAUL

"And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet."—II Sam. 9:3.

THE words are spoken of Mephibosheth. On that terrible and tragic day when Saul and Jonathan had perished on the battlefield at Gilboa there had been horror and dismay at the king's palace when the news was told. Among those who fled in great haste, was a nurse who took with her the five-year-old son of Prince Jonathan. It seems that as she fled down the stairway she fell and dropped the little lad. Probably both of his ankles were broken. In the disordered state of affairs, occasioned by the death of his father and grandfather, there was no one to see that his broken limbs were set. Nature did her best, and knitted the bones together, but alas! the little fellow was lamed for life.

At a later period when King David was well established upon his throne, he undertook, in some measure, to right the wrongs done to the house of

Saul. He made specific inquiry, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" In reply to his question an old servant was found who told the king "Jonathan hath yet a son which is lame on his feet." The king asked where he might be found and Ziba, the servant, replied, "He is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." David had him brought from this house into his royal presence. The record is that Mephibosheth, for such was his name, fell on his face and did obeisance. It is even possible that he feared the king would put him to death. None the less he offers himself, "Behold thy servant!" To allay any fears he may have had, David said, "Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." So astonished was Mephibosheth that he cried in his burst of gratitude of humility, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" The king immediately gave orders that all the property which had formerly belonged to King Saul, and all his house, should be turned over to Mephibosheth, the son of his beloved Jonathan. Servants were ordered to turn over to Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the fruits of their labors, for they were ordered to till the

lands for him and gather and put into storehouses. "But," said he, "Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table." It was done as the king ordered and the record is that "Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table." But it is added lest one forget, that "he was lame on both his feet."

We should say, therefore, that this lameness plays a considerable part in the attitude of David to Mephibosheth. It is true that he was accused at a later date of disloyalty to the king, but he succeeded in disproving this disloyalty, and we may very well believe that down to the end of life they lived in peace and harmony. Now this right royal deed was done for Mephibosheth by David for more reasons than one. Primarily, he was the son of David's most beloved friend. Again, he was the grandson, or in the Jewish speech, the son of Saul, whose kingdom David ruled, though by the laws of primogeniture this Mephibosheth might very well have been considered the heir to the throne, since Jonathan like Saul was dead. But undoubtedly, in addition to this reason when David met him face to face, personal reasons became very powerful, and his intellectual grace, his humility, his apparent weakness from his lameness, all these things appealed to the chivalry in the heart of David. Wherefore for his own sake, as well as for Jonathan's, this lame

prince profited from the generous mood of David.

1. Mephibosheth profited by David's love for Jonathan. Had it not been for that love, it is doubtful whether he would ever have made inquiry concerning the house of Saul. He could not but recall that when he, a country lad, first came up to Jerusalem, it was not with sullen face, or with jealousy, that the young prince had looked upon him, but the record is that when Jonathan saw David, his soul was knit to the soul of David and they loved each other with a love of surpassing purity and beauty. After Gilboa, when David had been seated upon the throne, in the first flush of his great power and dignity, he seems to have thought little about this friend of former days, whose life had ended so tragically. Now, however, when he had some time for reflection, the memory of the old and beautiful days rose before him. The memory of the first caress of the eye, of the first clasp of the hand, of their touching friendship, and then of that day when Jonathan was brought home dead—all these memories crowded in upon him. Again he felt the poignant pain of loss; again he lifted up his voice in that olden, golden wail, "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided." These memories urged upon him the beauty, as well as the duty of gratitude, and

emphasized in his mind the royalty of loyalty to the memory of friends. Hence his inquiry and hence his reinstatement of Mephibosheth. Now as it was not primarily for Mephibosheth's sake, but rather for Jonathan's, that David took him up, so it is not for our sakes alone, that God provides all the gifts of grace for us. Indeed we may consider ourselves, in more aspects than one, pictured in this chapter and story by the lame prince. For however crippled, however poor, however much an outcast any one of us may be, he is none the less still of royal blood, and he is none the less commended to the eternal mercy and love of the great Over-Father, with all the blessings which are entailed in His love for Christ the Son, and our Friend. Let us therefore accustom ourselves to thinking that though there may be worth and dignity on our part, in that we are princes, still it is true that the great kindness in our behalf is made for Christ's sake. He Himself has said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." God remembers Christ and the cross, and His honor is involved in giving us that high estate which we should have.

2. Mephibosheth profited by the fact that his needs were very great. He was exceedingly poor. He was a pensioner in the house of Machir ben-Ammiel. No doubt Machir was a loyal friend to the late king and all that king's family. There is

no particular evidence, however, that Machir was a man of high standing or of large estate, and the greatness of Mephibosheth's need is intensified by the fact that he was a scion of royalty. Rest assured that the members of that household had not permitted him to grow into manhood without being told the splendid as well as mournful history of Saul. Rest assured that he had been told again and again, "If you had your rights you would be sovereign of these people." Rest assured that he had as a youth dreamed of the day when the hosts of Israel could place themselves at his command, and when he would wrest the throne from the usurper. Doubtless he had had engendered in his heart what amounted to bitter hatred of the warlike king, a usurper, he considered, of his own place. The days went by, weeks, months and years and no loyal body of troops came to place themselves at his command. He remained lonely and forsaken, an outcast, pauper prince. His need was very great. Moreover he was lame. If he could only have bestirred himself, as a man of strong and straight limbs might have done, it is possible he could have incited men to follow his standard; but alas! he could not so much as walk, or work for his living. He *must* stay in the house of Machir, he *must* though it choke him eat the bread of beggary and devour at the same time his own heart.

Now in the midst of these great needs a messenger arrived, a messenger from David, the king. A summons to the royal presence! What did it mean? In spite of his hatred and his fear we do not doubt that there crept into his heart such a thought as this, "Now doubtless these great needs of mine shall be met." He crawled into the presence of King David, torn between hope and fear, and the first word the king spoke was the pronunciation of his name, "Mephibosheth." Tremblingly and yet proudly he answered, "Behold thy servant!" David calmed his fears at once. "Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake." A man of keen insight, and of clear unbiased judgment, we feel sure that David at a flash comprehended the great need of Mephibosheth and determined at once, not only for Jonathan's sake but for the sake of Mephibosheth himself, in his vast needs, what he would do.

Again we say this is a picture of ourselves. How vast are our needs! How deep, how wide, how lofty, how unfathomable this human heart! Something tells that we are princes in exile, and that the food which that earth-home to which we have been exiled can give us is in no sense comparable to the longings and wishes of our natures that somewhere there is a patrimony, an inheritance reserved for us; and in the midst of this our huge overwhelming

want, our vast incalculable need, our God sends His messenger to us, exiled and beggared princes, and for Christ's sake as well as for the sake of the great need of us, says, "Come into that inheritance prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It was Paul who exclaimed, "My God shall supply all your need."

3. Mephibosheth profited by his humility. To our modern ears there may be the sound of insincerity, of affectation, in the words with which Mephibosheth named himself. "What is thy servant," he cried, "that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" It was not a mere figure of speech of Mephibosheth. He was himself as nothing but a poor wretched outcast, unsupported and lame. In proportion to the great indignation and sense of injustice which had lived in his heart so long, he now swept to the opposite extreme. He thought not that he should be indignant at being so poorly treated, not that he should be angry at King David for usurping his rights, but rather he felt his unworthiness even so much as to stand upright in the presence of his sovereign, anointed of God and ruling the people of Israel. What could he, Mephibosheth, lame and weak, have done on the battlefield where David had won victories in the name of the Lord of Hosts? What kind of figure would he, broken and lame, have made in that palace and on

that throne which the kingly figure of David was so splendidly adorning? What kind of music would the heart-sore Mephibosheth have given to the people for those victories and those pæans of praise, which David had given them, when his royal fingers swept the lyre? The fitness of his king and the unfitness of himself were plain and clear; he felt now that he could go back to his obscurity in quiet humility. "Thy servant," said he, "is as a dead dog." Why should the king look upon such as he? The king stooped and lifted him tenderly, embraced him for Jonathan's sake, kissed his forehead, betokening that he recognizes him as of the royal household, and said, "Whatever honors and emoluments belonged to your father's house, these shall be yours and your children's forever; but as for you, royal child of my beloved Jonathan now long dead, you shall eat your bread at the king's table in the king's palace from this day and henceforth." His humility had purchased this great exaltation. Any rude, crude, selfish struttings and demands would have hardened the heart of David, and the words of Mephibosheth applied to himself in humility would have been applied by others in contempt and curse. And now instead of being called a dead dog, he was praised, and clothed in garments of worth, and sat at the table of the king.

Whatever may be our feelings or our thoughts

with respect to our worth or our deserts, or the high station we should have, when we stand in the presence of God humility sweeps over us like the waves of a mighty sea, and we feel like falling down on our faces and crying, "What are thy servants but dead dogs!" "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" or the sons of men that Thou shouldst visit them!

Job in his day rolled forth sonorous words concerning man's worth and dignity. He hurled questions into the heavens as to the right of God to punish man; but when God Almighty had appeared to Job he bowed his head in shame and in humility. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear," he says in awed tones, "but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." But this humility as in the case of Mephibosheth, as in the case of Job, is the first step to that dignity which comes to the children of God. It is stooping to place one's foot upon the lower-most stone of that stairway which leads to His great throne.

Ah, yes, friends, like poor Mephibosheth we are princes exiled from our father's house. Our needs are overwhelming in proportion to the dignity and worth of our souls, and we are lame and need help along life's roadway, but let us never doubt that we shall some day stand in humility and awe in God's

presence, and that He shall give us that position which means that we shall go out no more, neither hunger nor thirst any more, but that the Lamb shall feed us, and shall lead us to fountains of living water, and we shall sit at the king's banquet forever.

XII

STREAMS IN THE DESERT

"In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."—Isa. 35:6.

WHAT would the world be without water? Vegetables are from five-sixths to nine-tenths water. Animals, too, are mainly composed of water, though the proportions vary. Since our own bodies are mostly water, we can exist without food for a number of days, if we have plenty of liquids to drink; but to be deprived of water for even a few hours would cause torture intolerable. To have nothing liquid for a few days would result in death. Without water, earth would indeed be a sterile promontory.

In olden days Egypt was the granary of the world. In still more ancient times that fertile land was but a part of the great Libyan desert. Herodotus says, "Anyone who sees Egypt, without having heard a word about it before, must perceive, if he has only common powers of observation, that the Egypt to which the Greeks go in their ships is an acquired country, the gift of the river." Ages upon

ages the northeast of Africa, from the Red Sea on the east to the Atlas Mountains on the northwest, was one vast desert. South of this desert country, in the regions of equatorial Africa, the rainfall was tremendous. Great inland lakes, of which Victoria Nyanza is the largest remaining body, formed here. Their outlet was no doubt largely into the Indian Ocean, but partly through what is now called the Kongo into the Atlantic. In one of those processes of change in the conformation of the land surface of the earth, a range of mountains was thrown between this watered region and the Indian Ocean, and a smaller range of hills diminished the outlet to the Atlantic. A great body of water burst out to the north, threaded its way through the valleys, cutting down barriers, leaping precipices, and finally, gliding through the eastern end of the Libyan desert, entered the Mediterranean Sea. This was the Nile. Having cut its channel the great river flowed within its banks during certain months of the year, and established its custom of an annual overflow. Nomadic tribes from the desert, peoples from the south country and from Asia, perceiving that the river would make a garden spot, built their cities, towns, and villages along its banks, and in time there was Egypt. Water had rescued the Libyan desert from sterility and had made Egypt a marvel of fertility.

In the western part of our United States is what is called the Great Basin. It comprises parts of the present states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Idaho and Utah. There are more than two hundred millions of acres which, until very recent times, were as sterile as Sahara. These comprised the Great American Desert. Now, deserts are not always level sandy plains. In fact they seldom are. The Great American Desert contains mountains, and is surrounded by still loftier ones. In fact, the explanation of the American Desert lies in the arrangement of the mountain systems. Winds from the east are robbed by the Appalachian highland, and pour the rest of their riches into the Mississippi valley. Winds from the southeast are drained of their moisture by the Rocky Mountains. Winds from the west are milked by the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade ranges. Highlands of the Rocky Mountain system to the north, and highlands of the same system and the Sierra Madre to the south, shut in the great basin so that rains are practically unknown. But within recent years more than ten million acres, or one-twentieth of the entire sterile country has been reclaimed, and the reclamation consisted in one process—bringing water to the ground. Irrigation, in a desert country, means reclamation.

The world cries out for water. Drought means

death. The Ancient Mariner told how his ship drifted in the open sea, no wind stirring the sail. His words are a picture of death from thirst. There the men lie on the deck, gasping for breath, their lips and tongues swollen, and their bodies withered, emaciated. The mariner sleeps and dreams that rain falls, and he awakens to find his dream is true. A few draughts of fresh water restore him to life.

We are so used to water that we underrate its value. When we complain of the heavy rains, we do not think what they mean to the world. Water means the grass of the meadows upon which sheep and the cattle upon a thousand hills must graze. Water means the forest with its waving boughs and its grateful shade. Water means the fruit, the golden globes of the orange tree, the blushing crimson of the apple and peach. Water means the seas of wheat, their beautiful billows swaying under the summer wind. Water means stately and musical rows of green Indian corn, singing stories of happy homes crowded with bright-eyed children whose red lips they shall feed. Water means life: life in flower, life in bird, life in beast, life in man!

Were there some all-powerful demon who desired to destroy every trace of life on our planet and to destroy it with the greatest torture imaginable, that

demon, emerging from the black Tartarean realms of death, would stretch his mighty power over the surface of the earth, and, with his hot breath, would suck up every drop of moisture and leave the ground dry. The ships would be stranded amidst dead and decaying fishes on what is now the bottom of the great seas. The lakes would be beds of parching dust. The rivers would be trails of treeless sands and arid rocks. The springs and fountains would cease to bubble. No water would leap over the shining rocks of the hillside. Drooping birds and moaning beasts and wailing children and men and women with parched and bleeding lips would be crying to God for water. It would be death!

Now, what water is to the physical world, the water of life, the water of God's love, is to the moral world, to the spiritual world. If nine-tenths of all living things is water, one might say that ninety-nine one-hundredths of all the fruits of the spirit are borne by the Spirit in a world that would otherwise be morally sterile.

What a wonderful picture is that in the last chapter of the Apocalypse where the aged John in his vision sees "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This river sends its invisible, soul-blessing streams into the earth's moral deserts, and they become fragrant, beautiful, fruitful.

We call the benevolent man "humane." The history of humanity does not warrant the use of the term. Many a poet before the time of Burns could have sung "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Without the love of God, without divine waters of life flowing into men's souls, there is no "humanity." It does not exist. "Were there ever times," someone stops to inquire, "were there ever times when the world was a moral desert?" Yes, there is a picture in an ancient Book of an ancient patriarch to whom the voice of God came and said, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Men had shut out the streams of God's love from their hearts, and the earth was corrupt and was filled with violence in those days before the fountains of the great deep were broken up.

And then in the days of Elijah, Israel was all but a moral desert. The prophet believed there were none left through the channels of whose souls still flowed the water of life. And God Himself could find but seven thousand in all Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Then there was that time when the young Josiah, at the age of eight, was called to reign over Judah. When he had been reigning eight years, so wicked were his people, that he tore down the temples of Baal, broke their altars

and their images into a thousand pieces and ground them to dust. He destroyed the priests of Baal and strewed the dust of the images upon their graves. He then sent men to investigate the condition of the temple, and there, in a secret place, all unused perhaps for generations, all covered with dust, all stained with time, the priest found a Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses. Josiah's kingdom was sterile but this Book opened channels again for the water of God to flow.

It was a sterile time when Jesus came to the world. Atheism was everywhere. Men with the brain-power of Cæsar and Cicero could not accept the childish fables concerning the gods who were supposed to dwell amidst the clouds on Mount Olympus, and, since they knew naught of the true God, they were atheists. Atheism is drought and sterility. It was a sterile time. Fruit of a certain kind was being borne, but it was such fruit as one might find on the sun-blistered plains or scorched mountain slopes of Arizona and New Mexico today: Spiny cacti, thorns, and scrawny sagebrush, but no fruit to feed the bodies, no fruit to feed the souls of men. Jesus came at this sterile time and poured afresh into the world great streams of the water of life, streams that burst out in every direction and flowed into every sun-blistered plain and every hell-scorched valley; and everywhere that it

flowed the cactus and the thorn-bush gave place to flowers and fruits and golden harvests of grain.

But because men dammed up the streams of living water, or turned them aside into improper channels, or walled men off so that they could not drink—because of these things sterility came again. Christendom was becoming a moral desert in the days of the Monk of Wittenberg. Atheists, and worse than atheists, sat upon the throne of St. Peter. Shrewd, low-lived, and unprincipled women governed the church of God, or the church which claimed to be of God. Alexander VI, dead at the hand of an assassin, fell prone on the steps of St. Peter's and was so despised that there was none so poor to do him the reverence of a burial. Wickedness in high places, wickedness in low places! Only thorns and cacti and scrawny brush could grow.

But the Reformation came and opened channels for the flowing of the waters of life again. Once more the moral world blossomed as the rose. The moral and the spiritual desert is in any part of this world where there is not the love of God, where the "water of life" does not flow. The fair land in which you live is fruitful only in as far as waters flow through it. And this fair land, by the same token, is a moral desert when God's love is not known, when His waters have not quickened men's souls.

Each separate soul is fruitful in proportion as God's grace flows through his heart. What about your soul's garden? Is it parched and dry? Bears it fruit, or only evil weeds? By their fruits ye shall know these gardens. Are they deserts, walled in by the mountains of selfishness and of pride, by the stony, arid hills of hate? Do they bear thorns and thistles, or, as the Apostle names them, evil fruits: to wit, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, reveling, adultery, uncleanness, hatred? These are indeed the fruits of the Godless, Christless life. Or is your life fertile because the mountains of pride and selfishness have been overflowed, cut down, by the floods of God's boundless love? Have the arid plateaus of your life been watered by the tears of Gethsemane? Have the Rockies of hatred and the Sierras of pride been leveled by the streams from Calvary? Has your parched, fruitless soul been flooded from the fountains which gush forth on the hills of God? Then you know what it is for the wilderness and the dry land to be glad. You know what it is for the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. For in your wilderness waters have broken out and streams in the bitter desert. Everlasting fruitfulness is yours, and everlasting joy.

XIII

THE MANY-SIDED JESUS

"Some say thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."—MATT. 16: 13-16, verse 14.

WE have an interesting comment here upon the way men looked upon Jesus. It is as though we see Him reflected in a mirror. Indeed He is reflected here in the mirror of the human mind. From these reflections we easily perceive that He is not regarded in precisely the same light by different men.

A study of the New Testament reveals the fact that there is the widest divergence possible in the way different people looked upon Jesus. There is the harsh and critical attitude of the official churchmen of the time. To them He was a breaker of all the laws and traditions of the Jewish people. Furthermore, we are told, that He was looked upon as a blasphemer and an impostor. But still more degrading terms, if such were possible, were applied to Him. He was called a wine-bibber and a glutton, was spoken of as an habitué of nameless resorts. It was said of Him that He went with

kindred spirits when He flocked with publicans and harlots. But it is not this wider divergence of opinion to which our text calls attention. It is rather to a more restricted, a legitimate divergence.

There was, as we see, a very much wider divergence of opinion, even in Jesus' own day. It is a sad commentary on human bigotry that "His own" received Him not; that some of His own even went so far as to say He was possessed of a devil. For those who denounced Jesus, we have no word of explanation; certainly no word of extenuation. For those of to-day who are of the contrary part, we hold no brief. But surely we shall not be far astray if we say that the differences shown by our text are sincere and truly devout differences.

One loves to think that these opinions were those of the masses of Israel, of the bulk of the common people. Often the common judgment is more nearly correct than that of any class or sect. There is a very real sense in which the ancient adage is true: *vox populi, vox Dei.* True the reported opinions are not the whole truth, but they are certainly nearer to the truth than the hate-inspired epithets hurled at Jesus by the fanatical Pharisees.

So it is not correct to say that public judgments mirrored by the apostles were false. All those who saw in Jesus the power of God which made them say He was a prophet, were on the right

road, even if they had not reached the end of the way. Their opinions were not false, only incomplete opinions. For it was not incorrect to compare Him with the great prophets; to find in Him such prophetic powers as to cause the belief that He was the reincarnation of Jeremiah, of Elijah, of John the Baptist, or of some other holy seer of God. The only fault to be found with this opinion is that it has not proceeded far enough. It must not stop with the recognition of Jesus as *one* of the prophets; it must continue until it makes the confession of faith which Peter here makes: "Thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

As a center around which to group our thoughts, let us notice the common element in this difference of opinions about Jesus. True, according to Peter one group said, "This man, Jesus of Nazareth, is Jeremiah come to life again." Another group said, "This is not Jeremiah, but Elijah." There was another group who said, "You are both wrong, this is a reincarnation of John the Baptist," while still another group would not commit themselves to any one specific prophet, but said, "We do not think He is Elijah, or Jeremiah, or Amos, or Moses; but we do believe that He belongs to the great order and succession of the prophets: the days of the prophets have come again. We thought they had passed away forever. We thought the last prophet

who camped on earth had folded his tent when Malachi's spirit went back to God; but we see we are mistaken, for another great prophet has arisen amongst us, and tabernacles with us for a time." You see *the similarity outweighs the dissimilarity.* The common element of this judgment is that *they all believe Him a prophet.*

Now there is something very fascinating to my mind in this thought. It leads off into a most instructive and uplifting conception of the character of Jesus and of His work amongst men.

That Jesus is not the same in every sense of the word to you that He is to me, is due to no variableness in His character, no vacillation in His purposes. He Himself is more fixed and constant than the northern star. The eloquent author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Hence when we assert that Jesus is a different Being, in some senses, to each of us, we certainly do not mean that His character is an insubstantial thing. Nor do we mean that He is a projection of the brain, or of the personalities of you and of me and of everybody; for however interesting is the study of such a Jesus as we might conceive He would not be that constant quantity which He must be to fulfill the requirements of the text, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," and to fulfill also

the demands of His saviourship that He should be the Saviour of all peoples. But here is the element of truth: Jesus is seen in a different way by one man from the way He is seen by another, because each man is unique in his needs and in his perceptive powers. It is a truism that no two men see a proposition exactly alike. We do not see *each other* in exactly the same way. The genial Autocrat of the Breakfast Table has humorously illustrated this fact for us. He tells us that when John and Thomas converse, there are no less than three Johns:

"The real John; known only to his Maker.
"John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him.
"Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but very often unlike either."

This might be carried on to infinity, for though the John whom Dr. Holmes talks about was a real person, and his realness a constant thing, still he was seen in more or less different ways by everyone who looked at him or spoke to him. This is what I mean when I say Jesus is not in every way the same to you that He is to me. He is the same Saviour, the same Lord Christ, rich unto all who call upon Him, but *my special need is peculiar to myself* and *I find in my Saviour that which meets my special need,* just as *you find in Him that which meets your special need.* He would be less than He is, were this not true.

See how this thought fits different men, then, of one church, or one communion. True there is a divergence beyond which no man can go and be true to Jesus. Such a divergence would class the one diverging with the Pharisees and Scribes, who denounced Jesus as an impostor, not with the honest general public who had varying beliefs as to which prophet Jesus was, or was most like, but *who still believed* that whatever one He resembled or reincarnated, *He was a prophet* and a very great one.

Now within the fold of our church, or of any church, there is this legitimate divergence of view with regard to Jesus, and it makes for the welfare and furtherance of the church. One man presents a theological Christ, a Christ who condescends, as it were, to save the world. Another presents an intensely human Messiah, yearning and longing to save Israel. One is a Matthew fitting Jesus into all the traditions of the elders concerning the coming of God's Anointed. Another is a Mark, stating with conciseness and brevity the tremendous works and miracles of Jesus, as if for a Roman, power-loving world. Another is a Luke, who sets forth an historical Christ, gives in full His genealogy, tells of the songs of the angels, relates Jesus to Augustus and Tiberius and other potentates of the world. A fourth is John, who gives us a philo-

sophical, a theological Jesus, setting forth His divine discourses concerning this great sacrifice which He makes.

The lesson to be learned from this is a lesson of forbearance, a lesson of tolerance on our part toward those who are honestly and earnestly serving Jesus, who acknowledge and love Him as their Lord and Saviour, and yet present Him in a more or less different way.

Consider also how beautifully this fits into the different branches of the Christian church. Now there is very much said about church unity. Perhaps we shall go a little further towards church federation than we have already gone. Perhaps too, the split-up sections of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, for example, will come together into an organic unity, as I for one think they should; and all the Methodists into another; and all the Baptists into another; and so on. But we shall never bring all the varying denominations into one organic unity. It is neither desired nor desirable. For just as individuals differ among themselves in their mental characteristics, so also are there groups of individuals who are more or less similar and who differ from other groups. The apostles said, "Some say Jeremiah, others Elijah, and others John the Baptist." There are still Jeremiah *groups* and Elijah *groups*. There are those who can feel at

home in almost any Christian church, but if I understand human nature, the majority of men are so constituted that one particular church or communion would lay stress upon those aspects of Christ and of His gospel and His sacraments in a way which would appeal, fascinate, hold, uplift, while another communion would not. Make it personal: nothing would appeal to me less than the routine and formality of our high church brethren of the Episcopal or the Roman fold. That does not by any means say that this more formal, more ornate service, is wrong. It by no means asserts that this is an incorrect way to worship God. There are many people, thousands, millions, who find in the ornate, formal services the best expression of their ideals of worship. Many a devout soul has risen on the incense-filled air of a Roman cathedral to the very foot of the throne of Christ, and many such persons would find the barer and more intellectual service of a Protestant church lacking in that which is most truly helpful to their spiritual life.

If we believe that God's hand is in history, if we believe that He works out His will even amidst the crash of wars and the fall of empires, certainly we must believe also that His hand is in the history of the church, and that even these so-called divisions of the church are for His honor and His glory. If that is questioned, and if it can be shown that divi-

sions are a blunder, a mistake, He certainly has overruled that blunder and mistake and made them minister to His honor and glory. If the Methodist church does not quite meet my spiritual needs, does not quite show me the Jesus for which my whole nature cries out, then perhaps I shall find it in the Baptist, the Congregational, or the Presbyterian. And if the churches of Protestantism cannot give it to me, then perhaps I, or you, or someone might even find it in the church of Rome.

Now what has been said of individuals within one communion, and of different communions of the Christian church, may be carried further. The many-sidedness of Jesus should be considered in its relation to nations. His wonderful adaptability or adaptation to the ideals, the widest, highest and deepest needs of the races, is what makes Christianity essentially the missionary religion. Quite frequently someone says, "Why isn't it just as reasonable for the disciples of Buddha to send missionaries to America as for the disciples of Jesus to send missionaries to India, China and Japan?" The answer is that Buddha, in so far as he is the light to any place, is essentially the light of Asia, NOT the Light of the World. His dreamy, mystical idealism will not suit, could not be made to fit, the hustling, busy pragmatic peoples of the West. Nor is it possible for my mind to conceive

of an adaptation of Buddha and Buddhism to Germany, France, England, or America. Again there is Mohammed: who can fancy a Mohammedan civilization, with its disregard of veracity, its lower standard of morality, its corrupt family life—who can fancy such as this among the Anglo-Saxon people? Or how could one ever make a Frenchman, whose eyes are always on the future, and who shudders even to look over his shoulder for a moment at the black abyss of the past, venerate his ancestors and walk with Confucius in the darkness of the dead ages? Quite otherwise is it with Jesus. A nation which loves Buddha and gets light from him, will find a greater, a sweeter, a nobler Buddha in the person of Jesus. The nation which can worship Mohammed will find a mightier prophet than Mohammed when it knows Jesus.

It is therefore easily seen that this many-sidedness of Jesus is due not alone to the different eyes and different viewpoints of individual men; but also that it is a part of His divine adaptability, His divine adaptation, to the needs of all men, of all races, and all times. He is the universal Son of Man—neither Jew nor Greek. He embodies within His person the highest ideals of every people: the desire of all nations meets its fulfillment in Him. The shores of the Yellow Sea are as impressionable to His feet as are the sands of Arabia; the Hima-

layas are as hospitable to His voice, when once it is truly heard, as are the Alps or the Alleghanies. Hence, He is sure to reign where'er the sun does his successive journeys run.

And now lastly consider for a moment how this many-sidedness of Jesus, this adaptability, meets our individual needs, in our every-day lives. There is no experience possible to us in which Jesus cannot and in which He does not double our joys and diminish our sorrows. More than St. Paul ever was, He is all things to all men.

Is it that we are tiny children, just beginning to look out with wistful eyes upon the long avenues of the world? At mother's knee we learn to lisp our baby prayers to this Jesus who, once Himself a babe, knows our little sorrows better than our earthly parents can.

Is it that we are about to break the home ties? Father's husky voice is telling us to walk in the Light; and mother's tender kiss is dewy upon our forehead as we trudge out to face the world. What companion so well-fitted to cheer and comfort us as we fare forth on the long road as that Jesus whose feet were scarred by the stones of life's rough paths while yet the morn and liquid dew of youth was about Him?

Is it a marriage? Are two mornings joining themselves in the hope to reach the night together?

Jesus was the honored guest at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and he will be, if we permit Him, the best-loved, and the most needed guest at our weddings in Philadelphia, and Chicago, and everywhere else.

But what is it? Has a tiny soul fluttered down into our arms, only to spread its wings and flit back to God, leaving us to sigh for the touch of a flower-soft, baby hand? Who can so soothe as He whose seamless robe is by our beds of pain; whose tears are our balm; who calms the fretting, stormrent spirit even as He calmed the Sea of Galilee?

Are life's loads heavy, as we bear the heat and burden of the day? Yonder He stands, just as He did in the old Judean days, stretching out His hands to the world-weary, to the tired and worn body and soul: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Yea, even as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we fear no evil, because He is with us, and His rod and staff comfort us.

He is beautiful beyond compare to these eyes which see as in a glass darkly. What shall He be when we behold Him by the white light of the throne of God—when we see as we are seen, and know as we are known? "We shall see Him as He is." And the most marvellous thing is yet to be added: "We shall be like Him."

XIV

GLORY OF THE CROSS

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—GAL. 6: 14.

THE origin of crucifixion as a means of punishment is lost in antiquity. It may have originated with the Persians. It was known to the Phœnicians, and the Chaldeans used some such form of punishment. From the Phœnicians the Greeks and Romans borrowed it. It was not a Jewish custom. Among the Jews it was rather the custom to execute the criminal and then hang his body on some tree; but crucifixion was unknown to them until the days of their Roman subjection. Even among the Romans themselves, in their hardest days, the cross was degrading in its significance, and only the vilest wretches and criminals, and the lowliest slaves, were put to death by such a cruel method. Cicero, in his oration against Verres, accuses him of a crime that amounted to impiety in that he had put Gaius to death by this method. He wrung groans from his hearers and drove Verres in horror and dismay from the city by describing

this crucifixion as "the most miserable and most painful punishment," also saying, "It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen; to scourge him is a wickedness; to put him to death is almost parricide; what shall I say of crucifying him? So guilty an action cannot by any possibility be adequately expressed by any name bad enough for it." Yet, when the Lord of Glory, the Son of Man, was put to death it was in this disgraceful and hideous manner.

When a Jew who had all of the revulsion of feeling against this form of punishment that is inherent in his race, and a man, too, who was exceedingly tender-hearted, declared that he glories in a cross, it is a remark worthy of the profoundest consideration. How could he, how anyone, how could you and I to-day, glory in such a thing? Can we glory because we rejoice that a man has been put to death? Can we glory because that death was undeserved? Can we glory because that undeserved death was given in the most cruel form? It is for none of these superficial reasons that Paul could glory, and it is for none of them that you and I can glory in the cross to-day. But he gloried and we glory through the meaning of the cross to humanity. The cross itself, without the Divine sacrifice upon it, has no meaning in your life and in mine, as it had none in the great Apostle's, but the cross as the emblem of a divinely wrought salvation, a divinely sent Savior,

and a divinely accepted sacrifice, is the cause of Paul's glorying, and the cause of the Christian's glorying to-day.

There are four elements in this great change that has taken place which we shall notice—this change which made so hideous a thing become the most admired, which has made the most terrible form of death become the symbol of life.

First: It was an instrument of pain. Now it is the symbol of triumph over pain. In this there is cause for glorying. How the world has suffered in its travail of pain! How men have builded themselves homes and beautiful cities, but neither the walls of their homes nor the gates of their cities have been able to keep this monster from entering and racking their bodies and making their lives one long succession of groans. Pain is ever present with the human race, one of its most implacable foes.

Standing near a cross upon which a criminal has just been executed, we might gaze into his face and observe how he deports himself in this fearful ordeal. He may whine and beg piteously, as some fawning terrier might whine under its master's lash. He might groan and writhe and contort his muscles with unnamable agony, as a martyr being burned might groan and writhe. Or he might suffer

silently with hard, hot eyes, no tear coming to cool his cheek or soothe his soul with its own balm. Or he might weep and moan as some woman whose only child has died. But whatever might be the expressions that sweep over his face, whatever might be the manifestations of that which he feels, I doubt not the first thing that we should think of would be how terrible must be the pain. It was not otherwise with the divine sufferer on the cross of glory. Pain there wrenched from Him groans and cries of agony and almost of despair; and yet those very cries, those very groans, that very shed blood, those very tears, are the symbol to us of the conquering of pain. If one has surrendered himself to this pain purely for the good of others, if one has voluntarily suffered such agonies as these in order that he might be a help to his fellow-beings, then is pain in a measure conquered; and he who suffers the smaller pain, looking upon the great sufferer, says, "O thou who didst bear that pain for me, help me that I may bear this. My suffering otherwise would be more grievous than could be borne." Hence, now this cross, which was once the symbol of pain, represents to us the comfort and the consolation which men most need in their hours of suffering; and instead of being now a symbol of pain, it is rather a symbol of triumph over pain.

Second: It was formerly a sign of shame. It was a disgraceful thing. It may be that the sufferer was some base-born being, unworthy of the name of man, some semi-beast. It may have been a hard-hearted wretch who waylaid travelers in the desert places and cruelly and heartlessly robbed them of all their possessions. It may have been a murderer whose hands smelled of the lifeblood of some poor being whom he had caused to look his last upon the sun. Had we stood at the foot of his cross and looked up at him our next thought after that of the terrific pain that he must suffer would be this: "What shame! What disgrace! What degradation!" Why, men permit even the very dogs on the streets, that snarl and growl ferociously, to go unmolested; but this man is lower than a dog, and more dangerous than a dog, for he has been judged worthy of this bitter death. We should think of the shame that would entail upon his family if he had any. If the parents who watched over him in his infancy and childhood are still alive, we should be willing to say that if they are in this throng of people who witness his death to-day they are in the outskirts of the crowd, hiding perhaps behind yonder knoll, or peering from yonder clump of bushes, their very faces written over with the shame that they feel. Had he a wife and child? Surely that woman who should be honored by him is now

in the darkness of her own room weeping bitter tears into her pillow while the children wail piteously about her. O the shame of such a death! The cross is the symbol of his shame. Can I glory in such a symbol? I can glory in it because it is no longer the emblem to men of degradation and shame. It is rather now the emblem of purity and of the world's cleansed life.

Bring this emblem that once stood for shame into the streets where shame now walks unabashed, and no sooner do the denizens catch a glimpse of this former shameful thing than their faces, all unused to blushes, begin to burn; and their lives appear in all their hideous blackness, and in all their monstrous impurity, in the presence of this thing that was once so impure and so shameful. And this is another reason why we can and do glory in the cross. That it is an enemy to shame, that it lifts the degraded, that it wipes the smirch from the brow, it takes the obloquy from the name, and it makes the sinful one, so stained with his sin, honorable and pure in the sight of all men.

Third: It was a sign of guilt. That man hanging on the cross you would say is suffering pain. He is suffering it under most shameful conditions, but alas, he suffers it justly. Surely he would not be there were it not for his guilt. Surely he would

not be the spectacle for this jeering and hooting populace were it not that he has committed some outrageous crime. Whatever may be our sentiments of humanity, however lovingly and peaceably inclined we may be, there comes to us, when we read of the punishment of some great criminal, a terrible sense of the awful justice of his punishment. We may differ as to the right of the state to inflict capital punishment, but differ or not, we all feel when a murderer has been punished according to the laws of his state that it was not with malevolence or hatred that this thing has been done, but that in the currents of the courts human justice, which is a faint symbol of Divine justice, has been meted out. And so this cross was a symbol and punishment for guilt. But that sufferer, who by dying upon it wrought it from a thing of shame to a thing of glory, that beautiful sufferer whose very tears have been the balm of the ages, was a guiltless man. There was no spot of sin in his life. There was no taint of guilt about him. His hands were innocent of his neighbors' goods and his brother's blood. Even the accusations that were brought against him were untrue, but had they been true they in themselves would not have constituted guilt in the eyes of modern times. Wherefore from the day on which he was elevated to this cross to this present moment it is no longer a sign of guilt,

but rather a sign of guiltlessness. It stands as a warning hand, it is true, to show that the wrath of the law may be executed upon him who disobeys the law, but rather is it read in this light to say: "Though the wrath of the law may be executed upon him who breaks the law, still this emblem that once meant guilt now for you may mean guiltlessness. Through Him who suffered here you may be rescued from suffering the penalty of your sins, and your guilt may be taken away."

Fourth: It was a symbol of man's implacable hatred. Now it is a symbol of God's unfathomable love. Could human cruelty devise anything worse than nailing one to a cross? Could Divine love devise anything better than rescuing man from his lost state? This symbol of man's hatred has now in this way become man's greatest blessing through the love of God. In this sense the Apostle gloried more than in the others, or rather he gloried more because this includes the others. He catches a vision of a humanity blasted. He catches a vision of civilization crumbling, a vision of a setting sun with a hopeless night to ensue; and lo! when he looks again, through the rifts of this cross he sees a vision in a new light. Civilizations are born afresh, nations are renovated and given new life, and the sun that was about to

sink is seen to be rising higher in the skies, and no night is impending, but rather day is coming. He glories in the cross of Christ because it means the pardon of men and their reconciliation to God. He glories in the cross of Christ because it means that when he himself has run his own course he shall be received into the presence of Him who counted not the shame and the pain, but despised them, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. He glories in the cross of Christ because it can be given to the poorest and the lowliest as well as to the highest and the mightiest; and all who accept it, accept it to their soul's salvation, and to their eternal glory. This emblem, then, that once meant shame, guilt, pain and death, now has come to mean purity, innocency, health and life; and for it a million voices sing to-day, "In the cross of Christ I glory."

Now, my brother, my friend, what is your relation to this cross and its glory? Is it one of indifference? Does that vast tragedy mean nothing to you? Have the groans reached across the centuries to no avail? Are you among the idle spectators who look upon the crucifixion and go about their daily business and straightway forget what they have seen? Does it leave no impress upon your life and upon your character? I say to you to-day you can-

not afford to be indifferent to this most tremendous fact in the history of the world.

But what is your relation, my friend, my brother? Is it one of aversion? Are you antagonistic? Are you among those who jeer and wag their heads and say, "Aha! and aha"? Are you among the scoffers who cry, "He saved others; himself he cannot save"? Are the huge, sinister arms of that cross, which have thrown their shadow athwart the world, cause for jesting and for blasphemy? I say to you, if your attitude is one of aversion and antagonism, you will certainly be crushed beneath the weight of this same cross.

But what is your attitude? Is it one of glorying? Do you feel the mighty loveliness, the eternal beauty, that rests like the shining diadem of God upon its rugged form? Is it to you the most appealing of figures? Is it to you the most sacred of symbols? Is it to you the emblem of the history of redemption? Is it a token to you of that fact that your Saviour and your Lord there reigned as a king, high seated upon His throne, and there continues to reign, that very cross now having become a greater throne than any on which ever earthly monarch sat?

Look at that cross to-day. Who does not thrill with love, who is not struck with conviction as he gazes upon that which has so moved the world? It

stands crowning earth now as it stood in Judea's day crowning bare Calvary's stone-hard brow. One arm of this same cross I fancy points to the east, whence rise the sun and stars, and seems to say, "To you, O sons of men, who have long sat in the shadows, I bring light." Its other arm, I fancy, points to the west, where fades the day after set of sun, and seems to say: "I carry light into the land of shadows and I make the night to disappear." It looks, I fancy, into the south as though to say: "No tropical bowers, heavy with bloom and fruitage, are so lovely as the Eden of my vision, toward which I point the sons of men." And its back, I fancy, is turned toward the cold and darkness of the dreary north as if to proclaim: "My warmth shall melt earth's frozen heart so that winter shall cease and the songs of doves shall be heard in the land."

O Calvary, O glorious mount, around which History has woven deeper spells and greater charms than she has woven around yon shattered Forum, or those broken columns of wind-swept Acropolis, or even of the piled stones of the pyramids lifting their changeless figures to Egyptian skies!

O cross on Calvary! Poesy has begarlanded thee with rarer beauties than ever earth's fairest queens have worn. Awful and hideous though thy shape once was, it has become to men emblematic of

celestial beauty. Thou art pressed by prattling infant lips, and thy beauty is kissed by the bride at life's orange-flowered door. Old men have hugged thee to their bosoms with trembling hands, and dying eyes have gazed upon thee as the soul has passed into the mystery of mysteries. Thou hast given earth's temples a new form and a new meaning, and thou hast added glory to the very altars of God most high. And the luster of thy glory shall never grow dim. Age after age shall roll over thee, but brighter and brighter shalt thou shine until thou shinest in the perfect day.

O cross of Christ, "joy of the comfortless, light of the straying, hope of the penitent," thou hast seen nations rise and decay. Thou towerest over these wrecks of time. Thou wilt see others come and others go, for in accents yet unknown and in ages yet unborn men shall hymn thy beauty and look upon thy loveliness through repentant tears and cry, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross!"

XV

THE PREËSTABLISHED HARMONY BETWEEN JESUS AND YOUTH

"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."—PROV. 8: 17.

JESUS died when about thirty-three. He was never an old man. He is the embodiment and the eternal symbol of immortal youth. Bulwer-Lytton, in "Zanoni," has drawn for us Mejnour, an embodiment of immortal advanced years, and also Zanoni, an embodiment of immortality in youth. The great novelist probably had in mind a more or less symbolic representation of God the Father and God the Son, with perhaps a hint at the Holy Spirit in the spirit of Science, which brooded over the lives of these characters.

Representations in early Christian art and in medieval art and literature, and even in the literature and art of modern times, have pictured God as of advanced years: a stately and benign Jove, with flowing, snowy hair and beard. Life is so essentially youth, the day so essentially morning, the meaning of the year is so bound up in

the spring, the human race with all its destinies, all its immortal longings and all its mighty forces, is so embodied in childhood and youth that one is led to believe, that behind all this beginning-to-be, all this birth, this seedtime, this generating, —that the power behind it all is the power of eternal *youth.* Wherefore, let us banish from our minds the thought of God as an old man, whose sorrows and troubles have whitened His head, and let us think of God, even *God the Father,* as we think of Jesus, His Divine Son, as *always young,* always beautiful. Certainly this harmonizes better with the exalted conception of God which Jesus Himself taught by His own life and by His words. He seems to have been a foe to growing old. His terminology, His way of thinking, the expressions of His life,—all these things were those of glorified youth raised to the ultimate power, and if there was any object or being found on this earth which Jesus reverenced, it was a little child.

And this is reasonable when we stop to consider: He was here to make the world over. It was an old world, it must be made new; it was a tired world, it must be given rest; it was a sorrowing world, it must be made to rejoice; it was a dark world, the light must be given to it; it was a dying world, it must have life, and have it abundantly; it was a world filled with men and women who were

growing old in spirit as well as old in body: the gashes cut into their countenances by envious time had sunk deeper than the face and were furrows in the soul. Wherefore, Jesus came to remake aging and age-laden man, to give him again the soul of youth.

What a startling statement that *we must be born again!* Bearded men, scholarly men, warlike men! Women with their children about them, grandmothers beaming gentle smiles upon the heads of a younger generation,—"Ye must be born again." Surely this man is mad, surely he is a paidomaniac! Can a man be born when he is old? Again, when the question is asked, "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He takes a little child, one perhaps with the large, lustrous eyes of the East, and setting him in the midst of the disciples, says: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Once more, when mothers and fathers were bringing their little children that He might touch them, the disciples were about to interfere, saying, "The Master has no time for these infants." But Jesus caught the word, rebuked the disciples indignantly, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the king-

dom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

There is a preëstablished harmony between Jesus the Saviour and ideal youth. Because of this preestablished harmony, *the time for approach to Jesus is essentially in youth.* May we let the "*wisdom*" of the Proverb be the *Jesus* of the New Testament, and proceed upon the thought, "I (Jesus) love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me."

We speak partly in reply to an oft-urged fact that of those who come to Jesus the great majority come in their early, tenderer years. Aside from the further fact that this is no more a sign of weakness on the part of the young than it would be to say that a majority of those who decide to enter the profession of law, to take up banking or farming, or any other occupation, make that decision in early years —aside from this I say, there is such a beautiful relationship subsisting between glorious youth as embodied in our noblest boys and girls, and immortal youth as embodied in Jesus, that this fact of *their early coming is only what should be expected.*

Wherein lies the harmony between Jesus and youth? A thousand answers may be given, for nothing can be said of youth, of the hopes of youth, of its beauties, of its glories, of its successes that cannot be said of Jesus.

The harmony between Jesus and youth is apparent in the matter of *idealism*. Youth is the time of poetry. Our young people dream their dreams. Before their eyes constantly dance visions of things that are in fact "sweetness and light." These dreams are noble and high. They build their castles in Spain. Contrary to the usual belief, those castles are real. Let us no longer call them mirages of the desert, or will-o'-the-wisps of the forest. Let us rather call them previsions of the eternal city, and beckonings of the Hand Divine. The castles are so real and so true that they affect character and make destinies. All honor and glory to the dreams of youth! All honor and glory to the ideal visions of our early days! When we are older, and what the world calls wiser, we may refuse to follow such visions; we may cry we are realists; we may harden our hearts; but none the less, back in the soul's memory, clear and young, shine beauteous visions of our youth.

What is realism? The world's so-called realistic stories are too often a rehearsal of the lowest, basest aspects of human life. Men have searched the gutters and the sewers for the abnormal, for the hideous, for the monstrous, for the depraved, for the soul and body burned and seared by the fires of hell, and have pictured these in all their revolting details, and have called the product realism. Such

is not the food upon which the soul of youth feeds. Paint for it, if you please, visions of sunrise, with limpid clouds touched with gold. Sing for it, if you please, songs of love and tender lullabies. Speak for it words of courage, of daring, of purity. Youth is the time of ideals. Galahad was young.

Now Jesus was an idealist. He was both poet and poetry. The years brought to Him no scorning of the sunrise, of the love song, and of deeds of glory. No coldness on the part of His neighbors ever made Him a misanthrope. Though deceived by His friends and scourged by His foes, He never became a cynic. The hard words that He spoke to the Pharisees who mocked God with the hollow shell of service, and the denunciation of the money-changers who polluted His Father's house, were not the actions of a misanthrope or a cynic, but the actions of an idealist, a youth who burned with high resolves kindled with fires from heaven descended. He denounced wrong, but ever trusted that right would ultimately prevail. Earth was fair, decked with the lilies which were clothed beyond the sumptuousness of Solomon in all his glory, and men were lovable, so much so He could die for their sins. That God would work wonderful deeds, was the belief of this idealist and poet.

Now Jesus with this idealism appeals to the spirit of youth. For it is only in youth or in those who

have preserved the spirit of youth that there can be a full response to the idealism of Jesus, the poet of unending morning.

This harmony between Jesus and youth is seen in the matter of altruism. Youth is altruistic. Here and there may be a child that has been petted and spoiled, or who is so unfortunate by nature that he is selfishness incarnate. But normal youth loves its fellows. It gets small joy from its pleasures unless they are shared with friends. The man who retires from his fellow-men to live his selfish life, all alone, is the one in whose soul the spirit of youth is dead, in whom the tenderness, "the morn and liquid dew of youth," are parched and dried. Youth loves to share its joys. It loves to work with its hands for its fellow-beings. In the young people's groups of the churches, from the little children of the kindergarten department up through the various grades and societies, we find that our young people are never so happy as when they are working, even with their hands, for the betterment of someone else. There is a beautiful custom in our churches, that the children, at Christmas service, bring manger gifts for the less fortunate children at our doors. He who has watched the shining faces of these children as they lay their gifts on the altar knows that we speak the truth when we say that their greatest joy is in doing for someone else.

Now, Jesus was an altruist. His life was literally lived for others, and if His death was not for others, then the meaning that the church has read into it for nineteen centuries has been wrong. Not merely for friends did He live and did He die—for good men of all ages live and die for friends—but this great Altruist commended Himself to us in that while we were yet sinners He died for the ungodly. He gave His life for enemies, and for those who put Him to shame. Tell the hard-hearted man, untrained to think of his brother's lot, and untrained to feel his brother's woes; tell the hard-hearted man in whom the generous impulses of youth are silent and still; tell such a one of this great unselfish life, and if it appeal to him at all it will be as it was to Heinrich Heine, who lamented the tragedy of the world trampling on the heart of another fool.

This harmony between Jesus and youth in the matter of altruism makes youth essentially the time when Jesus calls with His strongest appeal. The generous boundings of the youthful heart still beat high at the mention of unselfish, heroic, altruistic deeds; and youth feels now as youth has ever felt since that shining figure went back to God, that unselfishness and heroism and altruism never reached so sublime a manifestation in any other as in Jesus of Nazareth.

This matter of harmony between Jesus and youth

is manifested in the matter of enthusiasm and hopefulness. We combine these because an enthusiasm that does not continue to hope will sicken and die. Our children espouse great causes. It is a mistake to say they espouse them ignorantly and blindly. The Children's Crusades of the Middle Ages have been treated from every conceivable standpoint. They have been called "the blunder and the tragedy of the centuries." Viewed in one light "they were a slaughter of the innocent on a large scale, belonging to the mysteries of Providence which the future only will solve." But there is another way in which the crusades of these children may be looked upon, and that is, to remember, as their young leader said, "They went to God, and sought the Holy Cross beyond the sea." As Charles Kingsley has sung:

> "The rich east blooms fragrant before us,
> All fairyland beckons us forth;
> We must follow the crane in her flight o'er the main,
> From the posts and the moors of the north."

It is the call of a great cause to which youth responds, and tragic as is the story of these Children's Crusades, they illustrate how prone is youth to espouse the highest cause. Youth dreams earth's dreams and undertakes earth's hardest tasks. Its buoyant spirit knows no obstacle and recognizes no barrier. Youth levels mountains and fills valleys,

Youth turns rivers from their channels and makes seas open that it may pass through dry-shod. Youth espouses all great causes and merges itself in every tide that sweeps away the wreckage of the past. Youth marches in our temperance parades. Youth rises like the storm-cloud, sudden, terrible, when its native land is invaded. Youth fights earth's battles, builds earth's cities, conquers earth's forests, tills earth's fields, paints earth's fairest pictures. Youth sings the world's undying songs. Youth dreams out cathedral spires and tops the churches of the living God with chiseled visions which cut the clouds, soothing the surging world with marble music. Age may hesitate, but youth plunges into the fray; age may sit by the fire and doze, but youth clasps hands with the sublime Youth of Nazareth and goes forth with faith, hope, and love to conquer and save the world.

Is not this the story of Jesus? His enthusiasm, illumined with deathless hope, could not be destroyed. He came to fight battles against thrones, principalities, powers; against the very forces of darkness, against shame with her unblushing effrontery; against red-handed sin, against hungry death, against the yawning grave. Shame flaunted itself before His very eyes, and while He lived and fought for purity, Cæsars danced, nude and intoxicated, in the presence of harlots and de-

bauchees. But Jesus' enthusiasm in the battle never waned. Sin built its fire about Him, but His garments were unscorched. His hope like His youth was immortal. Death rose to terrorize Him, but the Stygian blackness of night did not destroy the light of His spirit. The grave opened its maw and received Him, but He arose from that grave with unchanged enthusiasm and undimmed hope.

Youth then is essentially the time for appeal, the time when the heart, beating with high hopes, will respond to the hopeful enthusiasm of that Jesus who, with the sea of death about to cover Him, cried out, "I have overcome the world."

Boy, girl, youth, maiden, young man, young woman, older men and women in whom the spirit of youth still lives, there is this harmony still existing between you and Jesus, the embodiment of immortal youth. If you and I find ourselves in harmony with Him, we, too, shall enter into the inheritance of the sons of God, and upon us shall be placed the amaranthine crown of glorious immortality.

Printed in the United States of America

PROF. HUGH BLACK

The New World

16mo, cloth, net $1.00.

"The old order changeth, bringing in the new." To a review of our changing world—religious, scientific, social—Hugh Black brings that interpretative skill and keen insight which distinguishes all his writings and thinking. Especially does he face the problem of the present-day unsettlement and unrest in religious beliefs with sanity and courage, furnishing in this, as in other aspects of his enquiry, a new viewpoint and clarified outlook.

S. D. GORDON

Quiet Talks on John's Gospel

As Presented in the Gospel of John. Cloth, net 75c.

Mr. Gordon halts his reader here and there, at some precious text, some outstanding instance of God's tenderness, much as a traveller lingers for refreshment at a wayside spring, and bids us hearken as God's wooing note is heard pleading for consecrated service. An enheartening book, and a restful. A book of the winning Voice, of outstretched Hands.

ROBERT F. HORTON, D.D.

The Springs of Joy and Other Addresses

12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

"Scholarly, reverent, penetrating, human. The product of a mature mind and of a genuine and sustained religious experience. The message of a thinker and a saint, which will be found to be very helpful."—*Christian Intelligencer.*

BISHOP WALTER R. LAMBUTH

Winning the World for Christ

A Study of Dynamics. Cole Lectures for 1915. 12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

This Lecture-Course is a spirited contribution to the dynamics of Missions. It presents a study of the sources of inspiration and power in the lives of missionaries, native and foreign, who with supreme abandon gave themselves utterly to the work to which they were called.

FREDERICK F. SHANNON, D.D.

The New Personality and Other Sermons

12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

Mr. Shannon, pastor of the Reformed Church on the Heights, Brooklyn, is possessed of lofty ideals, is purposeful, more than ordinarily eloquent and has the undoubted gifts of felicitous and epigrammatic expression. This new volume by the popular preacher is a contribution of distinct value to current sermonic literature.

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON — *Author of "The Eternal Christ," "David Swing"*

What Have the Saints to Teach Us?

A Message from the Church of the Past to the Church of To-day. 12mo, cloth, net 50c.

"Of that profounder life of faith and prayer and vision which issues in deeds of daring excellence, the Pilgrims of the Mystic Way are the leaders and guides; and there is much in our time which invites their leadership."—*Preface.*

JOHN BALCOM SHAW, D.D.

The Angel in the Sun

Glimpses of the Light Eternal. Cloth, net $1.00.

Dr. Shaw has prepared a series of spirited addresses marked throughout by sincerity and fine feeling, and free of all philosophical surmise, or theological cavil. "The Angel In The Sun" is a refreshing and enheartening book; the cheery word of a man of unswerving faith to his companions by the way.

PHILIP MAURO

Looking for the Saviour

12mo, cloth, net 35c.; paper, 20c.

The first part of this little volume is devoted to an examination of the chief reasons that have been advanced in support of the post-tribulation view of the Rapture of the Saints. The second part contains some affirmative teaching relating to the general subject of the Lord's return.

PROF. LEE R. SCARBOROUGH

Recruits for World Conquests

12mo, cloth, net 75c.

"Here is a soul-stirring message, presenting the call and the need and the response we should make. The author is deeply spiritual, wise, earnest and conservative in presenting his appeal.—*Word and Way.*

PRINCIPAL ALEXANDER WHYTE, D. D.

Thirteen Appreciations

12mo, cloth, net $1.50.

Appreciations of Santa Teresa, Jacob Boehme, Bishop Andrews, Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Shepard, Thomas Goodwin, Sir Thomas Browne, William Law, James Fraser of Brea, Bishop Butler, Cardinal Newman, William Guthrie and John Wesley, go to the making of Dr. Whyte's new book, a work of high authority, revealing on every page the man who wrote it.

JOHN HENRY JOWETT

My Daily Meditation for the Circling Year

12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

A series of choice, tabloid talks—a spiritual meditation for every day in the year. Dr. Jowett points every word of these brief expositions so that it tells, while the lessons he seeks to convey are so propounded as to enter the understanding of his readers along a pathway of light. The whole volume is of true mintage, bearing the impress of Dr. Jowett's ripest thought and fruitful mind.

S. D. GORDON

Quiet Talks About the Crowned Christ

12mo, cloth, net 75c.

After many years' study of the one book of the Bible devoted to the subject of the crowned Christ—the Revelation of John—Mr. Gordon has put these latest talks together. No book of the sixty-six has seemed so much like a riddle, and set so many guessing. Mr. Gordon, however, holds the deep conviction that it is wholly a *practical book*, and concerned wholly with our practical daily lives.

F. B. MEYER, B.A.

My Daily Prayer

A Short Supplication for Every Day in the Year.

32mo, leather, net 35c; cloth, net 25c.

"This is a tiny volume, in the 'Yet Another Day' series, and contains a brief prayer for each day in the year. Some of the petitions contain only one sentence, but each one is simple, pertinent, and helpful."—*Zion's Herald.*

GEORGE MATHESON

Day Unto Day

A Brief Prayer for Every Day. *New Edition.*

16mo, cloth, net 50c.

These choice prayers will be valued by the Christian world for the stimulus, inspiration, and wide spiritual outlook which have made the memory of their author a cherished possession.

HENRY WARD BEECHER

A Book of Public Prayer

12mo, cloth, net 75c.

"A distinct addition to our devotional literature. It is good for private reading; but would be especially valuable for ministers as an aid to the difficult, but immensely important, service of voicing the petitions of a congregation in public prayer."—*Standard.*

HAROLD BEGBIE *Author of "Twice-Born Men"*

The Proof of God

A Dialogue With Two Letters. 12mo, cloth, net 75c.

The author of "Twice-Born Men" here enters a new field of thought. It is a most effective book—one that will be read and passed on to others. His method of meeting the agnostic and the skeptic is admirable. Here is philosophy presented in conversational form, pointed and convincing.

WILLIAM J. LHAMON, D.D. *Dean of Bible School, Drury College, Springfield, Mo.*

The Character Christ—Fact or Fiction?

12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

A study of the Christian Gospels, prepared and presented with a view to enforcing the claims of the historical Christ. Attention is directed to the literary presentation of the character Christ.

C. L. DRAWBRIDGE

Common Objections to Christianity

Library of Historic Theology. 8vo, cloth, net $1.50.

An ably compiled volume dealing with almost every current objection to Christianity. The author writes with a pretty full knowledge of these objections, having, as Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, lectured in the London Parks and held his own against all sorts of questioners.

CHARLES J. SHEBBEARE *Rector of Swerford, Oxon, England*

Religion in an Age of Doubt

Library of Historic Theology. 8vo, cloth, net $1.50.

To this great problem Mr. Shebbeare addresses himself, claiming that with the old faith and the added insight of a new teaching, believers may lay the foundations of a devotional system, which furnishes a rational ground for a robust faith.

W. J. SPARROW SIMPSON, D.D.

The Catholic Conception of the Church

Library of Historic Theology. 8vo, cloth, net $1.50.

Dr. Simpson's book supplies the information and assists in forming a right judgment: What Christ taught and did; what St. Paul and the Early Fathers conceived to be the functions of the Church; the idea of the Church in the Council of Trent, are among the matters ably discussed.

JOHN B. RUST, D.D.

Modernism and the Reformation

12mo, cloth, net $1.50.

The aim of this able treatise is to defend the Protestant Reformed faith, as against the liberalizing movement within the Roman Church known as Modernism. The essential principles of Protestanism are set forth in detail with an exhaustive review of the trend and methods of Modernism.

A. T. ROBERTSON, D.D., LL.D.

Studies in the New Testament

A Handbook for Bible Classes in Sunday Schools, for Teacher Training Work, for use in Secondary Schools and Colleges. 12mo, cloth, net 50c.

In it are no references to books of any kind outside the Bible. With the help of the maps and a New Testament one can study this work *with no other books in hand.*

REV. JOSEPH T. GIBSON, D.D.

Jesus Christ: The Unique Revealer of God

8vo, cloth, $1.50.

The author has sought to see, and aid others in seeing Jesus Christ as He is presented in the Scriptures. He has compiled a "Life" neither critical nor iconoclastic, but designed for those who regard the Word of God as being not only the infalliable guide to faith and duty, but the authentic chronicle of the earthly life of our Lord. Dr. Gibson has harmonized the Gospels and from them constructed a graphic narrative which, contrives, to re-limn an old picture with freshness and charm.

REV. GEO. H. YOUNG, M.A., *Ass't Prof. Rhetoric and Public Speaking, Colgate University*

The Illustrative Teachings of Jesus

The Parables, Similies and Metaphors of Christ. 12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

"A most readable and practical treatment of the methods of the Master for the general Bible student and Christian worker. A valuable contribution to one's conception of Jesus as the 'Teacher come from God,' and revealing in life, content of instruction and method of presentation the will of the Father."—*Review and Expositor.*

W. BEATTY JENNINGS, D.D.

The Social Teachings of Christ Jesus

A Manual for Bible Classes, Christian Associations, Social Study Groups, etc. 16mo, cloth, net 50c.

In a series of twenty studies, the teachings of Jesus are applied to specific social sins and needs of to-day, such as poverty, pleasure, war, the drink traffic, etc., and shown to be the sure and only solution of the problems of society.

ROBERT FREEMAN

The Hour of Prayer

Helps to Devotion When Absent from Church. 12mo, cloth, net 75c.

"A volume of reverent purpose designed especially for those who wish some form of Sunday observance, or who, by stress of circumstances, are prevented from attending services in the churches. To shut-ins, mothers with young children, nurses and others who are unable to attend public worship, the book will particularly appeal."—*Buffalo Express.*

JAMES L. GORDON, D.D.

All's Love Yet All's Law

12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

"Discloses the secret of Dr. Gordon's eloquence—fresh, and intimate presentations of truth which always keep close to reality. Dr. Gordon also seems to have the world's literature at his command. A few of the titles will give an idea of the scope of his preaching. 'The Law of Truth: The Science of Universal Relationships'; 'The Law of Inspiration: The Vitalizing Power of Truth'; 'The Law of Vibration'; 'The Law of Beauty: The Spiritualizing Power of Thought'; The Soul's Guarantee of Immortality."—*Christian Work.*

BISHOP FRANCIS J. McCONNELL *Cole Lectures*

Personal Christianity

Instruments and Ends in the Kingdom of God.

12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

The latest volume of the famous "Cole Lectures" delivered at Vanderbilt University. The subjects are: I. The Personal in Christianity. II. The Instrumental in Christianity. III. The Mastery of World-Views. IV. The Invigoration of Morality. V. The Control of Social Advance. VI. "Every Kindred, and People, and Tongue."

NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS, D.D.

Lectures and Orations by Henry Ward Beecher

Collected by Newell Dwight Hillis. 12mo, net $1.20.

It is fitting that one who is noted for the grace, finish and eloquence of his own addresses should choose those of his predecessor which he deems worthy to be preserved in a bound volume as the most desirable, the most characteristic and the most dynamic utterances of America's greatest pulpit orator.

W. L. WATKINSON, D.D.

The Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul

12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

"These sermons are marked, even to greater degree than is usual with their talented preacher, by clearness, force and illustrative aptness. He penetrates unerringly to the heart of Paul's paradoxical settings forth of great truths, and illumines them with pointed comment and telling illustration. The sermons while thoroughly practical are garbed in striking and eloquent sentences, terse, nervous, attention-compelling."—*Christian World.*

LEN G. BROUGHTON, D.D.

The Prodigal and Others

12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

"The discourses are vital, bright, interesting and helpful. It makes a preacher feel like preaching once more on this exhaustless parable, and will prove helpful to all young people —and older ones, too. Dr. Broughton does not hesitate to make his utterances striking and entertaining by the introduction of numerous appropriate and homely stories and illustrations. He reaches the heart."—*Review and Expositor.*